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A JOURNEY BETWEEN EAST AND WEST:

Yang Changji (1871-1920) and his thought

BY

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Abstract

This is a study of Yang Changji (1871-1920), whose thought exerted a profound influence on the shaping of intellectual trends in the early twentieth-century China, notably the ideology of Mao Zedong, who was taught by Yang for five years.

Yang, well-versed in the Confucian and Neo-Confucian traditions, spent ten years studying Western moral philosophy and education in Japan (1903-1909), Scotland (1909-1912) and Germany (1912-1913). After returning to China he devoted the rest of his life to teaching ethics and education firstly at the First Normal School in Changsha (1913-17) and latterly at Beijing University (1918-1920), and to introducing Western philosophical, ethical and educational thought through translation and writings. How Yang Changji adopted and incorporated various Western elements, such as Kantian and Neo-Kantian ethics, the British idealism of T. H. Green, the humanistic and liberal tradition instigated by J Rousseau, and Spencerian utilitarianism, into his socio-political and ethical thoughts, while retaining the framework of Confucian humanism, is one of the principal aims of this study.

This study is divided into three parts, each of which consists of three chapters. A narrative account of the Hunanese intellectual tradition and the main trends of thought prevalent in nineteenth-century China, with particular reference to Hunan, will be outlined in chapter 1. The starting point of Yang's intellectual-spiritual quest was the achievement of sagehood and self-cultivation, a goal was based on a threefold humanistic concern: man's ultimate potential as an individual, the individual's relationship to society and the realisation of man's ultimate potential. Mind-cultivation and altering natural character were particularly emphasised, and his methodology was characterised by quietness, reverence and the floating mind. During this painstaking process of self-cultivation Yang's metaphysical views of man, mind and human nature were formed, influenced mainly by Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai and Wang Fuzhi (see chapter 2). Between 1897 and 1902 Yang reached his intellectual maturity. His reformist thought can be seen as a syncretism of the Confucian humanistic principle of "Perpetual Renewal of Life" and Western liberal democratic ideas, such as "popular sovereignty," "people's rights" and "individual rights." These new democratic ideals, together with nineteenth-century Western evolutionary theory, provided a new authority for Yang to challenge the Chinese monarchical system and to call for political reform. However, on a practical level, Yang committed himself to an intellectualistic-educational approach mainly influenced by his idea of seeking for radical solution and gradualism (see chapter 3).

Yang Changji's life and study abroad are studied in the contexts of the movement of Chinese students abroad at the turn of the twentieth century and of cultural communication between China and Scotland. The experience in Japan was crucial for providing Yang with his first contact with Western philosophy, ethics and education. The intellectual influence of Aberdeen University can be seen in Yang's systematic exposure to the history of Western ethics and modern currents of British and German ethics, such as utilitarian and evolutionary ethics and T.H. Green's concept of self-realisation.

In chapter 7 of Part III Yang's reappraisal of Confucianism, from the perspectives of Confucianism as religion and his attitude toward traditional culture, are discussed. In chapter 8 Yang's intellectual-education approach to China's modernisation is characterised in six aspects. His social criticism is distinctive for its application of Western humanistic values, particularly the concepts of person and personality in Kantian ethical thought. Furthermore, Yang was probably the first Chinese to introduce and advocate the idea of "sound and wealthy middle class."

The influence of Western thought can also be seen in shaping the core of Yang's thought, that is, two distinctive but inseparable ideas; valuing the self and comprehending the present reality, which are the subject of the final chapter. Yang incorporated pivotal ideas and values of Western liberal individualism, particularly Kantian notions of autonomy, respect for the self and person, and subjectivity, etc., into his notion of valuing the self. While freedom was the most fundamental concern in Kantian ethics and humanism, the independence of the self or an individual was at the centre of Yang's idea of valuing the self. However, his metaphysical view of the self and person remains largely a Confucian one. His notion of comprehending the present reality shows his profound concern with reality and an overwhelming emphasis on "strenuous action." The Individual's self-realisation should be applied here and now. Underlying Yang's two ideas was Confucian threefold concern with humanity. The Confucian ideal of the sage-king or *junzi* still loomed large in both the form and content, of each of Yang's two ideas.

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Introduction

Recent scholarship has contributed greatly to our understanding of Chinese liberalism, radicalism and revolutionary thought which were dominant currents in the first decades of the 20th century and the thought of their representative figures, such as Hu Shi, Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao. However, less attention has been paid to conservative and cultural-traditionalist strands of thought. As in the case of the West, Chinese conservatism and cultural traditionalism merged as a reaction to, and co-existed with, liberal, radical and revolutionary thought. They are an inseparable component of modern Chinese thought as a whole. The present work is an attempt to enhance our understanding of the complexity of modern Chinese thought through the case of Yang Changji (1871-1920).

Yang Changji, the subject of this thesis, is not difficult to categorize. A teacher by profession, he was the best known of the few pioneer Western-trained educators and scholars in China. His genuine commitment to education was deeply rooted in his sense of the Confucian *junzi*'s mission of being a teacher for society. Driven by a belief in acquiring "world knowledge in order to guide society" he spent eleven years studying Western education, philosophy and ethics in Japan (1903-09), Scotland (1909-12) and Germany (1912-13). After returning to China, he taught education and the history of Western education in Changsha (1913-17) and became the first professor teaching Western ethics at Beijing University (1918-20).

The unique position of Yang's thought in modern Chinese intellectual history can also be seen in his profound influence on the early thought of Mao Zedong (1893-1976). It was through Yang's influence that Mao was introduced to Kantian ethics and idealism, T.H. Green's individualism and the liberal tradition of Western thought. Mao's intellectual experiences during the Changsha and Beijing periods were to have an impact on his later thought. Moreover, Yang also exerted an extensive influence on members of the New Citizen Study Society (新民学会 *xinmin xuehui*). The majority of them were his students and later became leading figures of the Chinese Communist Party.

The thought of Yang Changji is more difficult to categorize, because it cannot be defined as either conservatism or liberalism, or radicalism. His thought combines the elements of all three systems of thought.

First of all, he was one of the prominent twentieth-century spokesmen for Confucianism. He never lost his faith in Confucianism and regarded Confucianism as a universal truth and the source of his intellectual and spiritual life. His thought, mainly represented in what he called two “isms” – valuing the self and understanding the present reality - was based on Confucian concepts of man, universe and society. While he refuted Kang Youwei’s argument for making Confucianism a state religion, he “agreed with the spirit of Kang’s suggestion for the study of the Confucian classics,” in the national debate of “reverence for Confucianism” (尊孔 *zun Kong*) and the “study of the Confucian classics” (读经 *dujing*) during the early Republican period.

He rejected radical ideas of denying Confucianism, Chinese heritage and tradition, and total westernisation which started to prevail in the late 1910s and he held that “the culture of a nation cannot be transplanted completely from another nation.” His political conservatism can also be seen in his advocating gradual reform, taking as its starting point the educational sphere which he thought as the foundation of society.

Despite his conservative and cultural traditionalist attitude toward Chinese culture and reform, he embraced the Western liberal and individualistic strands of thought and elaborated his “ism” of “valuing the self” (贵我主义 *guiwo zhuyi*). He was particularly attracted to Kantian and Neo-Kantian ethics, liberal individualistic values, such as autonomy and respect for person, Schleiermacher’s idea of individuality, T. H. Green’s concept of self-realisation, humanistic ideals and values of enlightenment pioneered by J. Rousseau and Spencerian utilitarianism. He may not have been acquainted with the German Romantics challenge to the mainstream view of the existence of universal moral laws which were characterized the thought of Kant and Johann Fichte (1762-1814). However, he was fully aware of the vital debate between individualism and holism (or collectivism) and formed his idea of public-minded individualism (有公共心的个人主义 *you gonggongxin de geren zhuyi*).

Again drawing on Western humanism Yang launched a fierce critique of Confucian moral codes, such as filial piety (孝 *xiao*) and chastity (贞 *zhen*), which characterised his radical social reform thought. To be sure, an in-depth study of Yang's thought will enable us to see modern Chinese thought in a new light.

This study is divided into three parts, each of which consists of three chapters. A narrative account of the Hunanese intellectual tradition and the main trends of thought prevalent in nineteenth-century China, with particular reference to Hunan, will be outlined in chapter 1.

Students and scholars of modern Chinese history have been aware of the rise of Hunan province from the mid-nineteenth century to the twentieth century and its significant role in the course of China's profound socio-political transformation.¹ Not only Wei Yuan, Zeng Guofan and Tan Sitong, the prominent figures of the mid- and late-Qing, but also Cai Hesen and Mao Zedong, from the generation of 1920s Chinese revolutionaries drew heavily on the intellectual heritage of the Hunanese school. However, the Hunanese intellectual tradition and its impact on the profound transformation of Hunan province remain understudied. By reading Yang Changji's writings, it is easy to discern how Yang's profound commitment to Confucianism can be traced back to the Hunanese intellectual tradition. In this regard, it is necessary to provide an account of the intellectual setting of Hunan where Yang's thought first began to take shape.

The starting point of Yang's intellectual and spiritual quest was "knowing the way" or learning to be a sage. What was the Confucian ideal of the sage-king? What were the characteristics of Yang's self-cultivation? What were Yang's view of the self and man which he formed during this period? These questions will be the central concerns of chapter 2.

After the Sino-Japanese War, the slogan "to learn from the West" became the consensus among the Chinese gentry-literati. While China acknowledged the West as her "teacher", these Western "teachers" continued to bully their "student." However, this did not cool down the enthusiasms and the desire of the "Chinese student" to

“seek truth from the West;” on the contrary, the ever-intensifying encroachment of Western imperial powers into China speeded up the process of learning from the West, as is evident in the large-scale movement of study abroad during the period from the closing decades of the nineteenth century to the first two decades of the twentieth century. These “overseas students”(留学生 *liuxuesheng*) were not only in the leading group of rebels against the Qing rulers but also formed the first generation of revolutionary republicans and were even “teachers” who exerted a shaping influence on the minds of the leaders of the People’s Republic of China.

Yang Changji was one of them. Motivated by a desire to acquire “world knowledge in order to provide guidance to society” Yang started a ten-year period of study abroad: six years in Japan, three years in Aberdeen and one year in Germany. His personal encounters with Japan, with early twentieth-century academic life in Britain and in Germany, the home of Western idealism, were crucial to the formulation of his ethical, educational, social and political thought grounded on a synthesis of Chinese and Western thoughts.

Yang’s personal experience of study abroad is associated closely with China’s socio-political development and the movement of study abroad at the beginning of the twentieth century. Chapter 4 will provides a broad historical canvas of his study abroad.

Yang was one of few Chinese who had already reached his intellectual and psychological maturity, when they received a formal education abroad. His commitment to Confucianism never wavered. Although quite a lot of his close friends, such as Huang Xing, Chen Tianhua, Yang Yulin and Zhang Shizhao became actively involved in anti-Manchu revolutionary activities in Japan, Yang remained aloof from the political activities of Chinese students in Japan, concentrating instead on study. Although he was a supporter of the ideal of the establishment of a democratic republican China, Yang insisted on an intellectual-educational alternative and a piecemeal approach to solving China’s problem, an approach which he had formed during the reform movement in Hunan. How was Yang’s experience in

¹ For example, Charlton Lewis, see his *Prologue to the Chinese Revolution: the Transformation of Ideas and Institutions in Hunan Province, 1891-1907*, Cambridge, Mass., East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1976. (Hereafter, *Prologue*)

Japan? What did he learn about Western education and moral philosophy at the Tokyo Higher Normal School? What were the major sources of influence to be found in the Western ethics to which Yang was introduced by his Japanese teachers? This will form the main concerns of chapter 5. While stories of political activism of Chinese students in Japan have attracted a great deal of scholarly attention, Yang's experience will shed new light on an aspect of history of the movement of overseas study to which comparatively little attention has been paid so far.

On the process of Yang's intellectual and spiritual development, study in Aberdeen is crucial for him directly getting in touch to the Western culture. To be sure, Aberdeen University's intellectual tradition in general and the scholarship of his teachers in particular are crucial factors which directly affected Yang's perception of Western philosophical, ethical and socio-political thought and post-Victorian British academic life. Taking this into account a sketch of Aberdeen's intellectual heritage and milieu is provided in Chapter 6. Yang was neither the first nor the last Chinese student in Scotland. What was the background to Chinese students studying in Britain? How much cultural communication was there between China and Scotland at the turn of the twentieth century were? This is an untouched field, but important for understanding Yang and other Hunanese students studying at Aberdeen. The influence of German education and philosophy is unmistakably evident in Yang's writings and translations following his returning to China. A very brief account of Yang's stay in Germany is provided, because of a lack of information details of Yang's life there, however, German influences on Yang's thought will be detailed in chapter 8 and 9.

By 1903 Yang Changji, driven by a strong desire to acquire "world knowledge" in order to be able to provide guidance for social reform, started his intellectual wandering from East to West. By 1913, after ten years of study abroad, Yang felt able and ready to provide "world knowledge" to his students and all members of Chinese society and nation. Yang believed this "world knowledge" referred to great ultimate principles (大本大源 *daben dayuan*) which could provide the solution for China's problems. His "world knowledge" was not a fixed system of thought, but was enriched and developed through his reflections on certain fundamental issues

regarding China's present intellectual and socio-political reality. Yang's "world knowledge" forms the main focus of part III.

During the reform movement in Hunan Yang Changji was profoundly influenced by Western ideas. Furthermore, his knowledge of Western politics, history and culture was systematically intensified following his ten-year study abroad. The first national controversy Yang encountered was in the debate over whether Confucianism was a religion. He became actively involved the debate, and his arguments will shed light on an aspect of views of those who, thought politically opposed to Kang Youwei's petition to establish Confucianism as a state religion, at the same time recognised Confucian as a truth and faith, thus differing from the view of radical intellectuals such as Chen Duxiu. As a Western-trained student Yang was able to reappraise Confucianism from a new perspective, that is a combination of Confucianism and Western values. The Neo-traditionalism and new Confucianism of the first two decades of the twentieth century require further scholarly attention, because in fact, they co-existed with cultural radicalism and liberalism, and formed an inseparable component of the main stream of modern Chinese thought. Yang Changji was a representative of this trend. His organic view of culture will be traced in chapter 7.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the idea of saving and transforming China through education gained vitality through a number of efforts, such as Yan Yangshu's "popular education" (平民教育 *pingmin jiaoyu*) in the 1920s, Liang Shumin's tentative "rural construction movement" in the 1930s, and Li Anzhai, an American trained sociologist and anthropologist, who attempted in the 1940s to civilise a ethnic group of people who lived a very primitive existence in a remote and isolated part of Qinghai province. Yang's commitment to an intellectualistic-educational solution can be traced back to the period of the Hunan reform movement (1897-8). After returning to China, Yang elaborated a pioneering vision of "educationalism" of his own style and practised what he preached through active participation in the promotion of modern education in China. His intellectualistic-educational approach thus will be the main subject of chapter 8.

After returning to China Yang devoted the rest of his life to teaching ethics and education, firstly at the First Normal School in Changsha (1913-17) and latterly at

Beijing University (1818-1920), and to introducing Western philosophical, ethical and educational thought through translation and writings. His translation of a history of Western ethics was recognised by Hu Shi as the first and the most comprehensive one in China. Meanwhile, he elaborated two distinctive but inseparable ideas: valuing the self and comprehending the present reality. Young Mao Zedong embraced these two ideas and interpreted them in his own terms as “individualism” and “realism,” asserting explicitly them as two principles to which he was committed.² What were Yang’s two notions? What kind of strains of Western thought influenced Yang’s view of the self? How did Yang incorporate Western and Chinese elements into his thought? What was the relationship between Yang’s two notions and the Confucian ideal of “sage-statesmanship”? Precisely, how did Yang draw on both Confucian and Western sources to elaborate his ideas of man, the self, subjectivity, the individual uniqueness and autonomy? To be sure, the discussion and analysis encounter certain significant themes in the study of modern Chinese thought, such as the liberal tradition in Confucianism, Confucianism and human rights, and individualistic value in Confucian tradition in comparing with the Western one.³ However, it is not an attempt of the present study to reach definitive conclusions about these issues. Rather, it is hoped that might add new perspectives to our knowledge of modern Chinese thought.

² Mao Zedong, “Lunlixue yuanli pizhu” (Marginal Notes to: Freidrich Paulsen, *A System of Ethics*) in Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao 1912.6 – 1920.11 毛泽东早期文稿 [Mao Zedong’s Draft Writings in the early period, June 1912 – November 1920] Changsha: Hunan Chubanshe, 1990, p. 203. (Hereafter *Mao wengao*). For the English translation see Schram ed. *Mao’s Road to Power*, (London, 1992) vol. 1, p. 251.

³ The scholarly efforts on this field present for instance, in *Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1985) ed. By Donald J. Munro; *Imaging the People: Chinese intellectuals and the concept of citizenship, 1890-1920* (New York & London: M.E. Sharpe, 1997) ed by J.A. Fogel & Peter G. Zarrow; and *Confucianism and human rights* (New York: Columbia University press, 1998), ed. by Wm. T. de Bary and Tu Wei-ming.

Part I

The Formative Years, 1871—1903

Chapter 1

Tradition and Transition

Yang Changji was born on 21st April 1871 in Bancang village of Qingtai *du* (都) within the administrative seat of Changsha County, Hunan Province.¹ He was the second son of Yang Shuxiang, a village teacher. Yang Changji was brought up there and lived there until the age of thirty-three when he had the opportunity to study in Japan. Undoubtedly, he was influenced profoundly during his formative years by the indigenous tradition of Hunanese scholarship, its culture and his family background.

Geographical and historical setting

Hunan, an area larger than England and with a population at the end of the nineteenth century equal to that of Italy's, is a mountainous province sitting athwart the north-south lines of communication of China.² The saying "three-tenths hill, six-tenths water, and one-tenth plain" was the terse description of the geographical extremes of the province. Hunan was the third richest rice-producing province of China during the late Qing, its plain providing the most of the grain. While the hills and mountains made living and communications difficult, the water highway became the pillar of provincial transport and communication, and fostered varied commercial activity.³

¹ According to the Chinese lunar calendar. The well-known and widely quoted source book *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China* (N.Y. & London, 1971) edited by Howard L. Boorman notes that Yang was born in 1870, while most sources from mainland China and Taiwan indicate the year of Yang's birth as 1871. The most reliable source is Wang Xingguo *Yang Changji de shengping ji sixiang* [The Life and Thought of Yang Changji] (Hunan, 1981), because his account is based on the *Putang Yangshi zupu* [Genealogy of the Yang clan of Putang] (unpublished manuscript). Wang's source reports that Yang Changji was born in the 11th year of Tongzhi Emperor reign i.e. 1871. *Du* was the name of an administrative unit which was a degree lower than a County (*xian*). It used to be called *li* (里). The number of *du* or *li* changed during the course of the Qing. In the mid-Qing Changsha County comprised ten *du*, each of them surrounded by several tens and hundreds of villages. See *Changsha xianzhi* [Changsha County Gazetteer] compiled by Zhao Wenzai & Yi Wenji et al., 1817 (with supplement and revised version), reprinted in Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1976. *ce* 1, p.154

² Roy Hofheinz, "Foreword" to Charlton M. Lewis' *Prologue to the Chinese Revolution: The Transformation of Ideas and Institutions in Hunan Province, 1891-1907* (Camb. Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. ix.

³ Zhang Pengyuan, *Zhongguo xiandaihua de quyuan yanjiu - Hunan sheng* (Modernisation in China, 1860-1916: A regional study of social, political and economic change in Hunan province), Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1983, p.302 (hereafter Zhang Pengyuan, *Hunan*). And C. M. Lewis, *Prologue*, p. 6.

About forty miles (one hundred and twenty *li*) northeast of Changsha, the provincial capital, lay Bancang village. An ancient pathway linking Changsha and Yuezhou (present Yueyang city) passed through the village. Yuezhou, the capital city of Yuezhou prefecture (*fu*), was the first city in Hunan forced to open to the foreigners.⁴ Thereafter Yuezhou became the import- and export-centre of Hunan, and by the first decade of the twentieth century was as important as Changsha.⁵

For the Hunanese the prestige of Yuezhou was associated primarily with Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989-1052), a celebrated statesman and scholar of the Northern Song (960-1127), and his elegant rhymed prose “Yueyang louji” [Yueyang Pavilion]. One idea conveyed emphatically and clearly in this work is that the scholar should put the fate of the country and the suffering of the common people above any individual desire and happiness. It was one of the major sources of the sense of responsibility Chinese intellectuals felt for their country and society.⁶

This “intellectual conscience” became one of the most notable characteristics of the Hunanese tradition, which can be dated back as early as the time of Qu Yuan 屈原 (c. 340-278 B.C.).⁷ It was enhanced through the example of Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692), an eminent thinker and patriot in the late Ming and early Qing. Down to the

⁴ Under pressure from the British consul at Hankou, Yuezhou opened for foreign trade on 13th November 1899. See *Hunan jin bainian dashi jishu* [Chronological record of major events in Hunan during the last hundred years], comp. by Committee for the compilation of Hunan provincial gazetteer, Hunan: Renmin chubanshe, 1959, reprinted by Kobayashi Jitsuya in Tokyo: Taian publishing Ltd, 1966. p. 170. For a more detailed account of the opening, see Zhang Pengyuan, *Hunan*, p. 110-113.

⁵ Zhang Pengyuan, *Hunan*, p. 113-119.

⁶ Eugen Feifel, *Geschichte der Chinesischen Literatur*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982, p.413-14. See also “Fan Chung-yen” in *Sung – Biographies*, ed. Herbert Franke (1976), pp. 321-330.

⁷ Qu Yuan, a native of state of Chu (present Hubei), is commonly recognised as a patriotic scholar-statesman and one of the most important poets in China. After serving as a high-ranking official at the Chu court, he lost the trust of the King of Chu and was dismissed and expelled to Hunan. However, he was still loyal to his country. His most famous poems “Li sao” (Encountering sorrow), *Jiu ge* (Nine Odes) and *Tian wen* (Conversation with Heaven) were written during his exile in Hunan. He drowned himself in the Miluo River in Pingjiang county, in 278 B.C. when he heard that Bai Qi, a general of Qin had occupied the capital of Chu because he thought that the state of Chu was completely finished. His influence in Hunan is particularly great. Hunanese respected him highly and in his honour temples were built throughout the province. The well-known festival of Dragon Boat Racing and eating *zongzi* stems from the local events held by people of Pingjinag county to commemorate Qu Yuan. Qian Jibo, the author of *Jin bainian Hunan xuefeng* [The intellectual trends in Hunan during the last hundred years], proclaims that Qu Yuan is one of the two primary sources of Hunanese scholarship and literature. See the book, p. 1. Furthermore, Qu Yuan was one of Mao Zedong’s favourite poets. At the age of twenty (1913) Mao even copied the whole of *Li sao* by hand, and Qu Yuan remained one of Mao’s most frequently read and cited poets to the end of his life.

late Qing, the sense of Hunanese self-confidence and of Hunan's leading role in Chinese politics and society were confirmed by the political rise of Zeng Guofan 曾国藩 (1811-1872) and "a galaxy of Hunanese officials" after the 1860s. They gave a new impulse to the sense of mission felt by Hunanese literati. As the father of two children, Yang Changji, in his early thirties, left his family in order to study abroad with the aim of acquiring "universal knowledge and using it to guide society."⁸ Yang's sense of the intellectual's burden and his heroic spirit at that time were reflected clearly in his impromptu poem written in Yueyang Pavilion in 1903, when he and his colleagues visited it on the way to Japan.⁹

Bancang village itself is a stretch of flatland situated between two hills, known as Yingzhu 影珠 (The Hidden Pearl) and Piaofeng 飘峰 (Floating Mountaintop). The Yang family home, located in lower Bancang, was known as *xia Bancang wu* (Cottage of Lower Bancang).¹⁰ Even though not far from Changsha, the political centre of the province, it was an isolated, quiet place and seemed to embody the Confucian ideal of a secluded and idyllic haven for the recluse. Yang spent his childhood there and began his first meaningful observations of society and the world. After the suppression of the 1898 reform movement, Yang returned home from Changsha. While teaching in the village, he continued to pursue Confucian learning and began studying English.¹¹

Yang felt strongly attached to his home and to the rural environment even when he moved to Changsha, after his return from Britain and Germany. While teaching moral philosophy at Changsha First Normal School Yang gave the name "Bancang" to his residence. Mao Zedong and his other students addressed him respectfully as "Mr Bancang". This was the land which not only gave him birth, but also his final

⁸ Yang Changji, "Yu guiguo hou duiyu jiaoyu zhi suo gan" [My impressions and views on Chinese Education after returning to China], *Yang Changji wenji* [Anthology of Yang Changji] edited by Wang Xingguo, Hunan, 1983. p. 52. (Hereafter *Wenji*)

⁹ See Zhu Deshang, *Guimao riji* 癸卯日记 (Diary of 1903), *Hunan lishi ziliao* [Hunan historical materials], No.1 1979. Further analysis of the poem will be given in chapter 3.

¹⁰ "Jiaoyang Tingba --- Yang Kaihui lieshi zhuanlüe "(Tall, Straight and proud Poplar ---- A brief biographical account of martyr Yang Kaihui)," *Mao zhuxi yijia liu lieshi* [The six martyrs of Chairman Mao's family], Hunan, 1978, p.3.

¹¹ Yang Changji, *Dahuazhai riji* [Diary of Dahua Studio], entry of 1st day of the eighth month, 1899 (lunar calendar), p.16. (Hereafter *Riji*)

home after death. Yang Kaihui 杨开慧 (1901-1931), his beloved daughter, and later wife of Mao Zedong (1893-1976), is also buried there.

The self-strengthening movement and ferment of reformist thought

An individual's thought, particularly in its formative years, is influenced by the ideas and values circulating at that time. As Hao Chang points out, such an influence can come about through both formal and informal channels of education.¹² However, this assimilation is definitely not a passive one, since an individual's perception of his or her social, cultural and intellectual environment is active and selective. An understanding of the historical situation and the intellectual milieu to which Yang responded is essential to understanding his thought.

During the years from the 1880s to the mid-1890s, when Yang Changji was attaining intellectual maturity, the Self-strengthening movement (1860-1894) was reaching its height and formed an important part of his early intellectual environment. His chief source of inspiration was Confucian wisdom and historical experience. Confucius noted that "If you can keep your own house in order, who will dare to insult you?"¹³ while the ancient *Book of Changes* claimed that: "The movement of Heaven is full of power. Thus the pursuit of self-strengthening by the superior man is ceaseless."¹⁴ The idea of *zhiqiang* (自强 self-strengthening) was a logical outgrowth of the tradition of Confucian socio-political philosophy, which attached the utmost importance to personal moral self-cultivation as the starting point for governing state and harmonizing the world. As for the strategy of a nation during a time of trouble and crisis, the enhancement of national wealth and power was given priority over other policies. Thus it is not surprising that in response to the increasing threat of Western power both the leading figures of the self-strengthening movement, such as Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang 李鸿章 (1823-1901) and Zuo Zongtang 左宗堂 (1812-1885) and reform-minded scholars of this period, like Wang Tao 王韬 (1828-1897), Feng Guifen 冯桂芬 (1809-1874), and Guo Songtao 郭嵩焘 (1818-1891), shared the belief that China's strength must come from within.

¹² Hao Chang, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning (1898-1911)*, (Hereafter *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis*), (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) p. 4.

¹³ Cited in John Fairbank and Kwang-ching Liu's "Preface to Volume 11" *Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911* (Cambridge, 1980), p. xx.

The idea of learning from the West, in the sense of borrowing Western industry and technology, became widely accepted among high-ranking officials. The consciousness of self-strengthening and the idea of learning from the West became the two major foundations of the self-strengthening movement. Although the limits of the self-strengthening movement are obvious, its far-reaching significance should not be underestimated. The seeds sown during the self-strengthening movement bore fruit in subsequent decades. In the case of Hunan, it enabled Wu Dacheng 吴大澂 (1835-1902), a governor of Hunan from 1892 to 1894, to transform Hunan from a centre of intractable antiforeignism to one that promoted self-strengthening by means of industry and new style schools.¹⁵

At the time of the Sino-French war (1884-5) discussion of political reform was widespread and, according to Onogawa Hidemi, the idea of institutional change (变法 *bianfa*) achieved significance around 1887. It resulted in a growing knowledge of Western political experience and intellectual culture.¹⁶ Notably, the idea of political participation, only marginally raised in the 1870s and 1880s, was now of central importance.¹⁷ Furthermore, the idea of institutional reform (改制 *gaizhi*) became increasingly accepted and was reflected explicitly in a number of political writings by reform-minded scholars or scholar-officials, such as Zheng Guanyin 郑观应 (1842-1922), Chen Qiu 陈虬 (1851-1903), Tang Zhen 汤震 (1857-1917) and Chen Chi 陈炽 (?-1899) published in the early 1890s. Their mode of thinking was still constrained within the framework of the dichotomy of *dao-qi* (道器 the Way/vehicle): the emphasis on the unity of *dao-qi* enabled reformers to give a solid philosophical foothold to the recognition of value in Western political ideals and institutions.

¹⁴ The translation of the first sentence is cited in Cary F. Baynes' English translation of Richard William's translation of *Book of Change*. See p. 5. The translation of the second sentence is mine.

¹⁵ Charlton M. Lewis, *Prologue* p. 40.

¹⁶ Onogawa Hidemi's *Shimmatsu seiji shisō kenkyū* [Studies in political thought of the late Qing] translated into Chinese under the title *Wanqing zhengzhi sixiang shi* by Lin Mingde and Huang Fuqing, Taibei: Shibao wenhua shiye chupan youxian gongsi, 1982, pp. 1-2, 48-50. (Hereafter Onogawa Hedemi)

¹⁷ Hao Chang, "Intellectual change and reform movement, 1890-8," *Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 11, *Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911* pt. 2, (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 280.

Thereby they paved the way for the emergence of radical political reformism after the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5).¹⁸

After the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5) the revived and growing sentiment of self-strengthening, along with the deep sense of what Hao Chang has called an “orientational crisis” gave rise to demands for political and institutional reform, amongst which those voiced by Kang Youwei were the most far-reaching.¹⁹ Kang was not only a thinker, but also a key participant in the unprecedented institutional reform movement of 1898, devising a comprehensive reform programme covering institutional, administrative, military, economic and educational aspects. He also promoted study-societies and established newspapers and a translation bureau in order to publicize Western ideas. In this way, his political ideas, which were crystallised in two slogans *gaizhi* (改制) or “reform of institutions” and *bianfa* (变法) or “changing the laws,” spread wider and wider.

However, what made Kang Youwei so distinctive from the reform-minded thinkers and scholar-officials of the previous generation was the comprehensive and complex system of thought underlying his political reform programme. Kang’s system of thought comprised three main aspects: firstly, in the political sphere, he advocated institutional reform and constitutionalism. Secondly, in terms of Confucian

¹⁸ Onogawa Hidemi points out that through conflicting *dao* and *qi* the official-scholars of “foreign affairs set up their philosophical foundation, on which their approach to the Western learning entirely rely, while emphasising the inseparability of *dao* from *qi* became the presupposition of the political and institutional reformism of reformist official-scholars before the Sino-Japanese War such as Wang Tao, Chen Zhi, Zheng Guanyin etc”. See his book, pp 49-74, esp. 70,73-4. Hao Chang has adopted this point into his “Intellectual change and reform, 1890-8.” See *Cambridge History of China*, Vol 11, pp. 282-3.

¹⁹ Hao Chang, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis*, p. 4-8. According to Chang, the initial optimism in the time of the Tongzhi Restoration quickly gave way to self-doubt. This shifting of self-doubt from the periphery toward the centre of the traditional political order was reflected in the unfolding of reformism in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This is evident in the fact that after 1895 reform-minded gentry-literati and scholar-officials began to question the legitimacy of cosmological kingship. The mystical halo of the institution and of the “son of Heaven” was crumbling. This was partly a result of the encounter with new Western scientific and religious ideas, such as the Copernican universe, and partly from internal intellectual development in the matter of the Chinese world-view. For instance, in the geographical writings of Hunanese scholar-officials like Wei Yuan, the notion of so-called “cosmological symbolism” as the ideological foundation of the institution of cosmological kingship had been shaken. Furthermore, the “cosmological symbolism” also constituted a part of the so-called “orientational symbolism” which defined the social status of people and the order of the world. Therefore, the conscious crisis of order had two dimensions: a political crisis of order and an intellectual crisis of orientation. In the framework of the Chinese system of thought, the “orientational symbolism” is seen by Hao Chang as the inner core. For a more detailed discussion of the function of “orientational symbolism” see *ibid*, p. 7.

scholarship, he provocatively reinterpreted Confucianism in his two major works *Xinxue weijing kao* [An inquiry into the classics forged during the Xin period] and *Kongzi gaizhi kao* [Confucius as institutional reformer]. He intended to provide irrefutable proof from within Confucianism itself that his reform movement was in accordance with the “Way of the sage.” Thirdly, Kang’s thought embraced the ideal of “the great unity,” (大同 *Datong*), a utopian ideal of universal moral community based on equality and mutual help.²⁰ Although there were Western elements in his ideology, Kang’s reformism, and indeed his entire thought, drew mainly upon Confucianism and the major trends of late Qing thought. For instance, the *Datong* ideal which started to take shape in 1884-85,²¹ was actually the outgrowth of many years long work on exploring and expounding upon the Confucian classics, in particular, the literature of the New Text School concerning the historical view of the three dynasties, Xia, Shang and Zhou. It is undeniable that Kang Youwei’s ideas, which became the guiding philosophy of the reform movement of 1897-98 in both Hunan and Beijing, were deeply rooted in the Confucian tradition.

It should be noted that, in the eyes of many other Confucian scholars and officials, Kang’s radical interpretation of Confucianism was simply heresy. Discrediting the Ancient text version of Confucian scholarship, Kang drew largely upon studies of the “*Gongyang Commentary*” by late Qing scholars of the New Text school. The *Gongyang Commentary* was the centre of the New Text School, one of the most important trends of Qing thought.²² Of course, Kang was not the first among them to devote himself to this field. However, the ideological implications of the New Text movement became clearer in the nineteenth century with works by Gong Zizhen 龚自珍 (1792-1841) and the Hunanese scholar Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1856); and Xue Fucheng 薛福成 (1838-1894), Kang Youwei 康有为, Chen Zhi, Chen Qiu, Tang Zhen and He Qi (Ho Kai) 何启 (1859-1914) in the 1890s. While the former group of scholars emphasised the *jingshi* 经世 ideal, the socio-political orientation in

²⁰ Li Zehou, “Kang Youwei sixiang yanjiu” (A study of Kang Youwei’s thought) in his *Zhongguo jindai sixiang shilun* [Essays on history of modern Chinese thoughts] (Beijing, 1979), p. 93-4. For a discussion of Kang Youwei’s philosophy and world view please see Hao Chang’s *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis* and Hsiao Kung-Ch’uan’s *A modern China and a new world*, a comprehensive study of Kang Youwei and his thought, especially, chapter 3 and 4.

²¹ Hao Chang, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis*, p. 34.

²² Liang Qichao’s *Qingdai xueshu gailun* [Intellectual Trends in the Ch’ing period], tran. by Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, (Camb., Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 88.

Confucianism with focus on administrative renovation, the latter directed its attention to political reformism.²³

Exposure to such an ideological environment helped a great deal in shaping Yang's firm commitment to moral self-cultivation and his belief that the inner moral strength of the self was the basis of an individual's independence (自立 *zili*) and self-realization. However, as a Hunanese, Yang's thought was inevitably influenced by the intellectual heritage in Hunan, which derived chiefly from four sources: First, the Hunanese school (湘学 *xiangxue*);²⁴ second, the Revival of the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism in the early nineteenth century; Thirdly, The influence of Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692)'s thought and fourthly, the movement of "practical statesmanship."

The intellectual heritage of the Hunanese school

Hunanese scholarship as a distinctive school did not emerge until the rise of the Hu Family school. However, Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐 (1017-1073), a Hunanese scholar and one of the five most important founders of the Neo-Confucianism in the Song Dynasty (960-1279), has been acknowledged by Hunanese scholars as one of the most important sources of the Hunanese intellectual heritage.²⁵

Zhou Dunyi and his legacy Hunan was one of the most important original locations of Neo-Confucianism in the Song period. The tradition can be traced back as early as

²³ For instance, the idea of *gaizhi*, which in the New Text literature might refer more to ritual change than political change, Kang added the implication of "a kind of political revolution and reform of society." See Liang Qichao, *Qingdai xueshu gailun* [Intellectual Trends in the Ch'ing period], tran. by Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, p. 94, and Hao Chang's *Liang Ch'i-chao and intellectual transition in China, 1890-1907* (1971) p. 23, 26. (Hereafter *Liang Ch'i-chao*)

²⁴ The use of the term "Hunanese school" (*xiangxue*) in its loose and broad sense, not only meant scholarship in a certain period. For instance, *huxian xuepai* or *xiangxue* has been translated as "Hunan School" to indicate the scholarship and intellectual tradition represented by Hu Anguo 胡安国 (1074-1138), Hu Hong 胡宏 (1106-1161), Zhang Shi 张拭 (1133-1180), and certain of their disciples in the Song. See Conrad Schirokauer's "Chu Hsi and Hu Hung" in *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism* (Honolulu, 1986), pp. 480-502. In order to avoid confusion, the "Hunanese school" is applied here to signify the entire scholarship and intellectual tradition of Hunan. It includes the thought and scholarship of scholars coming from Hunan, who, even though they had spent most of their time outside Hunan, were highly rated by Hunanese scholars. Furthermore, the Hunanese academies and their tradition are also considered to be an integral part of the intellectual heritage of the Hunanese school.

²⁵ The other four are Cheng Hao (1032-85), Cheng Yi (1033-1107), Zhang Zai (1020-77) and Shao Yong (1011-77). See Chan, Wing-tsit, "Introduction" to *Reflections on Things at Hand: The Neo-Confucian Anthology by Chu Hsi and Lü Tsu-Ch'ien*. Tr. by Chan, Wing-tsit, N.Y. & London:

the time of Zhou Dunyi, a native of present day Dao County in Hunan.²⁶ His thought was encapsulated in two major works: the *Taiji tushuo* 太极图说 [An explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate] and the *Tongshu* 通书 [Penetrating the *Book of Changes*]. Although these two treatises were short, they determined the direction of “moral metaphysics” for later Neo-Confucianism.²⁷ In the former, Zhou expounded upon the Daoist *Taiji tu* [太极图 the Diagram of the Great Ultimate] through using the ideas of the *Book of Changes*, a Confucian classic, to elaborate a metaphysical cosmology in which the universe originates from the Great ultimate (太极 *taiji*) and the Ultimate of Non-being (无极 *wuji*). In the latter Zhou elaborated on his “moral metaphysics,” which centred on *cheng* (诚, sincerity).²⁸

Columbia University Press, 1967. p. xvii. For the sources of Hunanese scholarship see Qian Jibo, pp. 1, and Li Xiaodan, *Xianxue lüe*, pp. 115-123.

²⁶ Although Zhou spent most of his life as an official and lived in Jiangxi after retirement, Hunan scholars held him in especially high regard and acknowledged him as the originator of *xianxue*. See Qian Jibo's *Jinbainian Hunan xuefeng* [The intellectual currents in Hunan of the last hundred years] and Li Xiaodan's *Xianxue lüe* [A brief Account of History of Scholarship in Hunan]. Hunan, 1983. Inspired by the distinctive characteristics of the scholarly and cultural tradition of Hunan, Qian, a native of Jiangsu province and man of letters, wrote the book while staying in Hunan after leaving Beijing in 1937 in the wake of the Japanese occupation. The book, first published in 1943 in Hunan was reprinted in 1985. Li Xiaodan 李肖聃 (1881-1953), a native of Changsha, was a close friend of Yang Changji. He published a brief biographical account in a certain Beijing newspaper to introduce Yang Changji, his personal character and scholarship, and, after Yang's death, also contributed a couple of articles to commemorate him. Li obtained the *xiucai* degree in 1889, and went to Japan in 1904, one year later than Yang, as a government student. After returning to China in 1911 he worked first for several newspapers in Beijing, and in 1913 when Liang Qichao was appointed as Minister of Law, he became his secretary. After returning to Hunan in 1917, he devoted himself to education. *Xianxue lüe* [A brief Account of History of scholarship in Hunan] was his lecture delivered in Hunan University during the period of Anti-Japanese War (1937-45). His daughter was Li Shuyi 李淑一, whose husband Liu Zhixun 柳直旬 was a close friend and comrade of Mao Zedong. She is best remembered as an old acquaintance of Yang Kaihui and Mao Zedong, to whom Mao wrote a poem, entitled “Reply to Li Shuyi”, in 1957.

²⁷ Mou Zongsan coins this term in order to distinguish Neo-Confucianism from the Western approach to philosophy, especially Kant's “metaphysics of morals” and his “moral theology.” While the subject of Kant's “metaphysics of morals” is ethics and the study relies on the metaphysical method, the thrust of moral metaphysics points to the elaboration of a metaphysical system through the fusion of moral philosophy and moral practice. The real intention of Professor Mou is to suggest an alternative approach which has not yet been explored fully by Western thinkers, but is found in Neo-Confucianism, that is, through the inner illumination of the “moral mind” (*xin*) and the development of the true human nature within himself to the fullest extent, man can achieve a so-called “intellectual intuition” (智的直觉 *zhi de zhijue*). That is the way to comprehend the metaphysical reality, which Kant failed to discover. See his *Xinti yu xingti* 心体与性体 [The substance of mind and the substance of human nature], (Taipei: 1968-9), Book I, pp. 138-172, and Liu Shu-hsien's review article in *Philosophy East and West*, 20.4 :419-422 (1970). Considering that a key assumption of Confucian thought is that no metaphysical or cosmological theories exist apart from moral philosophy, it is reasonable to characterise Neo-Confucianism as a system of “moral metaphysics.”

²⁸ The problem of providing an English translation of *cheng* was perplexed quite a few scholars of Chinese philosophy, including Chan Wing-tsit, Tu Weiming, Luke J. Sim, James T. Bertzke and Bounghown Kim. As they have pointed out, because it has a cosmic and ontological connotation, the term *cheng* goes beyond its usual English translation “sincere” or “sincerity.” Furthermore, other less

Zhou's concept of *cheng* was not an innovation, since it had been a central theme of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, and was referred to in both the *Book of Changes* and *Mencius*.²⁹ However, Zhou was the first to attribute prominence to the concept in Neo-Confucianism. One of the most distinctive characteristics of Zhou's approach was to use the *Book of Changes* to interpret the *Doctrine of the Mean* and *The Great learning*, which enabled Confucian ethics to be embedded in more solid metaphysical terms than before in response to the challenge of Buddhism and Daoism. Generally speaking Zhou's interpretation of *cheng* (誠) can be defined in two ways: ethical and onto-cosmological. While comprising the former meaning of *cheng* as sincere, true, real, and free from error (*wuwang* 无妄) in the *Zhongyong*, *cheng* in Zhou's mind denoted "the pure and perfect good." (纯粹至善 *chuncui zhishan*). What issues from the Way of heaven must be good and, therefore, the first hexagram (*qian* 乾) of the *Book of Changes*, the symbol of Heaven, the greatest originator and the source of myriad things in the world, is described as the source of *cheng*.³⁰ *Cheng* as the highest goodness itself becomes the ultimate source of moral principles.³¹ Also, as the perfect goodness, *cheng* in Zhou's thought was given an ontological significance: it is the

usual translations such as "true" or "truth," "reality" or "authenticity," cannot adequately express the two-fold implication of the term: metaphysical and ethical. See Tu Weiming's *Centrality and commonality: An essay on Confucian Religiousness*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989) pp. 16, 71-2. And also Luke J. Sim, s.j. & James T. Bertzke, s.j. "The notion of sincerity (Ch'eng) in the Confucian classics" in *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 21 (1994) 179-80. [Here I transliterate it in the general context, and put the English translation in brackets while discussing or explaining of the term.]

Quite a few scholars ranging from ancient to contemporary hold that the concept of *cheng* is the foundation of his moral philosophy, for instance, the Ming Confucian scholar Huang Zongxi (1610-1695) in his *Song Yuan xue'an*. As to modern studies, *A source book in Chinese philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), translated and with introduction and comments by Chan, Wing-tsit, p. 461; Bounghown Kim's "A study of Chou Tun-i's (1017-1073) thought" (PhD dissertation), chapter 5 and Zhu Hanmin's *Huxiang xuepai yu Yuelu shuyuan* [The scholarship of Hunan and the Yuelu Academy], Beijing: jiaoyu kexue chubanshe, 1991, pp. 20-1.

²⁹ Zhang Dainian, *Zhongguo zhixue dagang* [An outline of Chinese philosophy], Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1982, p. 328. Professor Zhang maintains that what occupies the centre of *Zhongyong* is the concept of *cheng*, the idea of *zhongyong* is only secondary.

³⁰ Zhou states "Great is the *qian* (乾) the originator! All things obtain their beginning from it." It is the source of sincerity. "The Way of *qian* is to change and transform, so that everything obtains its correct nature and destiny. In this way *cheng* is established." See chapter one of "Tongshu" [Penetrating the *Book of Changes*] in *Zhouzi quanshu* [The complete works of Zhou Dunyi]. The sentence in quotation marks is cited in *Book of Change*. For the English translation, see Chan, Wing-tsit, *A source book in Chinese philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 465-6.

³¹ Zhou Dunyi, "Tongshu" [Penetrating the *Book of Changes*] in *Zhouzi quanshu* [The complete works of Zhou Dunyi], chapter 2. Zhou states, "Sagehood is nothing but sincerity. It is the foundation of the Five Constant Virtues (humanity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and faithfulness) and the source of all activities." For the English translation, see Chan, *Source book*, p. 466.

fundamental essence not only of all beings, but also of moral principles and conduct.³²

Parallel with the structure of Zhou's metaphysics characterised by his distinctive idea of *taiji* (The great Ultimate) was the concept of *renji* (人极 the ultimate standard for man) in his moral philosophy. As a violent reaction against Buddhism and Daoism, the emergence of the idea of *renji* reflected the efforts of Song Neo-Confucians to reaffirm the central position and value of human beings. Through identifying *cheng* with the sage, Zhou made the connection between the evolutionary process of the cosmos and the moral development of man. Thus "*cheng* is the foundation of the sage," (圣人之本 *shengren zhi ben*) and "sagehood is nothing but *cheng* (sincerity)." What was attributed to *cheng* was attributed also to sagehood: pure and perfect good and the ultimate source of morality. *Cheng-sheng* (*cheng*-sagehood) thus denoted the highest spiritual state.³³ The sage "established himself as the ultimate standard for man" (*li renji*, 立人极) through the settlement of "human affairs" in accordance with the "principle of the Mean, correctness, humanity, and righteousness (for the way of the sage is none other than these four)."³⁴

In his metaphysics, Zhou placed man in the pivotal position in the universe. Man was the unique being who received the "highest excellence" in the creative process of the Great Ultimate.³⁵ Thus, man was not merely a "creature," but rather, since he possessed the creative potential, was capable of assisting in turn the unceasing transforming and nourishing of the cosmic process. In Zhou's thought, as well in the thought of all Neo-Confucians, sage is man in nature and the very embodiment of *renji* (人极).³⁶ The triad "*cheng*-sagehood-man," was the very core of Zhou's moral

³² Bounghown Kim, "A study of Chou Tun-i's (1017-1073) thought". (PhD. Dissertation) The University of Arizona, 1996, p. 223.

³³ Feng Bingkui, "Songming lixue de zhuliu" [The main sects of metaphysics in Song and Ming dynasty] in *Kong Meng xuebao* [Journal of 'Confucius and Mencius Society' of the Republic of China], No. 27 (1974), p. 163.

³⁴ Zhou Dunyi, "Taijitu shuo" in *Zhouzi quanshu* [The complete works of Zhou Dunyi]. See Chan, *Source book*, p. 463.

³⁵ Zhou Dunyi, "Taijitu shuo." See Chan, *Source book*, p. 463.

³⁶ Tu Weiming suggests that a sage cannot go beyond the structure of human beings. And he is the most authentic and real man. Tu Weiming, "The Neo-Confucian concept of man" in his *Humanity and Self-cultivation: Essays in Confucian thought*, Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1979, p.72. The essay first appeared in *Philosophy East and West*, 21.1 (1971).

philosophy, and provided the essential outline of Neo-Confucian ethics and of Confucian individualism.

Zhou Dunyi's doctrine of self-cultivation, which exerted tremendous influence on Hunan scholars, was based largely on his dialectical approach to *cheng*. Like the term *taiji*, *cheng* was assumed to comprise both substantial and functional aspects. *Cheng* in its essence was assumed to be absolute tranquillity and inactivity (寂然不动 *jiran bu dong*), while in its functional aspect it was seen as dynamic.³⁷ Presuming that absolute tranquillity was the foundation of the sage in his metaphysics, Zhou approved of stillness in his method of self-cultivation.³⁸ But in Zhou's thought tranquillity was never divorced from activity.³⁹ The essential way of the sage was thus said to be "having no desire" (无欲 *wuyu*). "Having no desire, one is vacuous (虚 *xu*) while tranquil, and straightforward while in action."⁴⁰ In this light, Zhou emphasised that the superior man had to "restrain his wrath and repress his desires," "move toward good," and "correct his mistakes."⁴¹ On the other hand he stressed that "thinking (思 *si*) is the foundation of the sage's effort." Only those who finally attained the state of "having no thought and yet penetrating all" could be said to have achieved sagehood.⁴²

The Hunan School Although Zhou's interpretation of *cheng* and his ideas of moral cultivation exerted a considerable influence on the Hunanese intellectual world, the

³⁷ Instead of *zhong* (equilibrium) in the *Doctrine of the Mean*, Zhou applied *cheng* to describe the original state of the moral mind characterized as the state of absolute tranquility of an entity.

³⁸ Zhou Dunyi, "Taijitu shuo." See Chan, *A Source book*, p. 463.

³⁹ Zhou maintains that tranquillity exists within movement, and movement within tranquillity, "Things (物 *wu*) cannot be tranquil while active or active while tranquil. Spirit (神 *shen*), however, can be active without activity and tranquil without tranquillity. Being active without activity and tranquil without tranquillity does not mean that the spirit is neither active nor tranquil. Things cannot penetrate each other but spirit works wonders with all things." Associated with his idea of *cheng-sheng* (sincerity-sagehood) it is evident that "being active without activity and tranquil without tranquillity" signifies the ultimate state of the spirit of a human being, namely, of sagehood or perfect *cheng*. See Chan Wing-tsit's "The Neo-Confucian metaphysics and ethics in Chou tun-i" and his "comments" on Zhou's "An Explanation of the diagram of the Great Ultimate" in *Source book*, p. 461, 465. 471-2.

⁴⁰ Zhou Dunyi, ch. 20 "Learning to be a sage" of *Tongshu*, see Chan, *Source book*, p. 473.

⁴¹ Zhou Dunyi, ch. 31 "The Hexagram of *qian* (乾 Heaven) *sun* (损 decrease) *yi* (益 increase) and activity" of *Tongshu*, see Chan, *Source book*, p. 477.

⁴² See ch. 9 "Thought" of *Tongshu*. There we find that Zhou's idea of thought and having no thought is in accord with his idea of "activity-tranquillity." Zhou states, "Having no thought is the foundation, and thinking penetratively is its function. With subtle incipient activation (*ji*) becoming active on the one hand, and with sincerity becoming active in response, on the other – having no thought and yet penetrating all – thus is one a sage." For English translation see Chan, *Source book*, p. 469.

foundations of the Hunanese School were not laid until the emergence of the “Hunan School” in the beginning of the Southern Song (1127-1279), of which Hu Hong (known as Mr Wufeng 王峰先生) and his remarkable disciple Zhang Shi were the leading figures. During the Northern Song (960-1127) the academy (书院 *shuyuan*), a new type of private educational institution, began to emerge in China. There were ten academies established in Hunan. Among them there was Yuelu Academy (岳麓书院 *yuelu shuyuan*), one of the four most prestigious academies in which Yang Changji once studied. The emergence of the academy formalised and institutionalised the previous private education (私学 *sixue*).⁴³ During the Southern Song the scholars of the “Hunanese school” successively set up three academies around the area of Mount Heng (衡山).⁴⁴ These academies served as institutional centres for the promotion of teaching and research.

This new form of educational institution attracted more students than before. No doubt on the one hand, the scope of its influence was broadening, while on the other hand such academies facilitated a more coherent Confucian scholarship. As a result a distinguished “Confucian fellowship” emerged in Hunan.⁴⁵ This was a group of Confucian scholars who shared similar political viewpoints and intellectual interests, and their scholarship was transmitted over several generations.⁴⁶ As one of the first and the most significant “Confucian fellowship” in the Song they exerted

⁴³ The academy consisted of four parts in general: lecturer hall, library, place for sacrificial rite and accommodation for students. For a detailed discussion of the reasons for the emergence of the academy in the Northern Song, its organisation and function, and its significance for the dissemination of Neo-Confucianism in Hunan, please see Zhu Hanmin, *Huxiang xuepai yu Yuelu shuyuan* [The scholarship of Huxiang school and the Yuelu Academy] (Beijing:1991), pp.5-17.

⁴⁴ Zhu Hanming, *Huxiang xuepai yu Yuelu shuyuan* [The scholarship of the Huxiang school and the Yuelu Academy] (Beijing:1991), p. 34-42.

⁴⁵ Professor Hoyt Cleveland Tillman in his distinctive study of the Neo-Confucian development in the Southern Song applies a new concept of “Confucian fellowship” as a descriptive term for the various Confucian groups centring on a few masters in the later part of the twelfth century. Referring to a network of social relations and a deep sense of community, the term denotes a new social and cultural phenomenon of Song China, rather than any philosophical or intellectual schools in the narrow sense. For the definitions of the term see H. L. Tillman’s *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi’s Ascendancy*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992, pp.3-5.

⁴⁶ The earliest literature regarding the intellectual origin of Hunan school can be found in the *Songyuan xue’an* [Anthology and critical accounts of Song and Yuan Neo-Confucianists], see chapters “Wuyi xue’an,” “Wufeng xue’an,” and “Nanxuan xue’an” in Vol. 34, 41 and 42. For a modern study of the topic, see Zhu Hanmin, *Huxiang xuepai yu Yuelu shuyuan* [The intellectual tradition of Hunan School and the Yuelu Academy] (Beijing, 1991), particularly chapter II. One point emphasised by Zhu Hanmin was the significant role of academies established by these Hunan scholars in forming a distinct intellectual tradition. See also Cai Renhou’s “Nansong Hushi jiaxue yu Huxiang

considerable influence on later “Confucian fellowships,” and particularly on Zhu Xi.⁴⁷

The scholarship of the Hunan School was centred on the Hu family starting with Hu Anguo (also known as Wending 文定), father of Hu Hong.⁴⁸ He admired the Luo School (洛学 ie, the doctrine of the Cheng brothers) and was regarded by himself and others as belonging to the Cheng tradition.⁴⁹

Hu Anguo devoted much time to studying and commenting on the *Chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals], which he regarded not merely as a book of history, but rather as “an essential text for the transmission of the mind” (传心要典 *chuanxin yaodian*).⁵⁰ For him the most important thing was to reemphasize the spiritual and cultural value of “mind-heart and nature” (心性 *xin xing*), the long-forgotten central theme of Confucianism. *Yuan* (元), *ren* (仁) and *xin* (心 *mind/heart*) were the key categories in Hu Anguo’s philosophy.⁵¹ In Hu Anguo’s thought these three denote the same thing

xuetong” (Hu’s family study in Southern Song and the tradition of its scholarship in Hunan) in *Kongmeng xuebao* [Journal of Confucius and Mencius Society], 21 (April 1971) 75-88.

⁴⁷ For the intellectual connections between Hunan scholars and Zhu Xi, see Conrad Schirokauer, “Chu Hsi and Hu Hung” in *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism* (1986), pp. 480-502. Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi’s ascendancy* (Honolulu, 1992), particularly chapter 1, 2, 3.

⁴⁸ Hu Anguo, a native of Fujian province, retired to Hunan and devoted his rest life to study and promoting Neo-Confucianism through teaching at the foot of Heng Mountain in Hunan. As a result, the Hunan School was also called *Henglu xuepai* (衡麓学派 Henglu School).

⁴⁹ Hu Anguo was not a direct disciple of Cheng Hao (1032-85) or Cheng Yi (1033-1107), but was linked to them through their disciples, particularly, Yang Shi (1053-1135), with whom he was acquainted when Yang became his successor at Jinmeng, You Zuo 游酢, and Xie Liangzuo 谢良佐 (1050-c. 1120). Huang Zongxi, “Wuyi xue’an” in *Songyuan xue’an* [Records of Song and Yuan Confucians], (Taipei: Commercial Press) Vol. 34, p. 1a. See also Cai Renhuo, “Nansong Hushi jiaxue yu Huxiang xuetong” (Hu’s family study in Southern Song Dynasty and scholastic tradition in Hunan), *Kongmeng xuebao* [Journal of “Confucius and Mencius Society” of the Republic of China], No. 21 (April 1971), p. 77.

⁵⁰ Huang Zongxi, “Wuyi xue’an” in *Song Yuan xue’an* [Records of Song and Yuan Confucians] (Taipei: Commercial Press) Vol 34, p. 6a

⁵¹ He read the foundation of human morality into the origin of universe, which was reflected in his identifying the ontological concept *yuan* (元 the heavenly principle and originator of universe) in the *Book of Changes* with the moral-metaphysical concept *ren* (humanity), the source of virtue and substance of morality, and mind. In the annotation of the first year of King Yin, he wrote, “The year when the King is crowned must be called *yuannian* (the beginning year), ... ‘Great is the *qianyuan* (乾元 Heavenly principle), the originator! All things obtain their beginning from it.’ That is the function of heaven. Ultimate is the *kunyuan* (坤元 earthly principle), the originator! All things obtain their lives from it. That is the function of the earth. Between heaven and earth stands man who forms a trinity with Heaven and Earth. Therefore, it is the ruler’s vocation to understand *yuan* grasping its inner nature (体元 *tiyuan*) of the heavenly principle, while it is the prime officer’s job to take care of *yuan* (调元 *tiaoyuan*).” In him, *yuan* (the primal) was not merely a concept with an objective ontological aspect, but also contains the subjective ethical significance. In chapter 3 of *Chunqiu zhuan* he gave further explanation. “What is *yuan*? It is *ren* (humanity). What is *ren* (humanity)? It is mind.

in substance, but with discrete functions and names. *Yuan*, the objective element, functions as the cosmological originator, *ren* is the source of morality; while *xin* (mind-and-heart) existed within men. In this connection, the objective and outer universe was transformed into the subjective and inner spirit. All the force and attributes, which belong to the universe, are attached to *xin* that exists only within men and not other beings.

Hu Anguo believed that the “message of the mind” (心法 *xinfa*), transmitted from the Great Yu (大禹) and formulated in sixteen Chinese characters, was the truth and principle for ordering the world which remained valid and available through time, for there was the commonality in men’s minds regardless of time and space.⁵² “Therefore, when the single mind is settled, the ten thousand things are in order and followed.”⁵³ As a corollary to this, the meaning of all history was interpreted according to the way that the sage-kings had fixed the “single mind.” The thrust of historiography was to discover the “subtle words and great moral principles” hidden in the Confucian texts. This approach to history is reminiscent of that of the *Gongyang* or New Text school tradition.

Hu’s scholarship was also linked with the strong sense of a mission of resistance to the Jin invasion and the restoration of the Song dynasty through the reaffirmation of the Confucian ideal of *jingshi*. Intellectually, Hu was a follower of the Cheng tradition, as mentioned above; politically, he was close to the conservative *Yuanyou* group led by Sima Guang 司马光 (1019-1086).⁵⁴ He regarded Confucius’ *Chunqiu* as “‘the great classic of managing the world’ (经世大典 *jingshi dadian*), providing moral principles and guidance for dealing with affairs. By no means could it be compared with empty talk.”⁵⁵ He even advised Gaozong Emperor 高宗 (reign period, 1127-1162) to devote himself to studying this “sacred” classic at the time of national and cultural

To legislate the ten thousand laws, to deal with the ten thousand affairs, to command and control the people, and to rule and govern the world, all of these are the functions of mind.” See Hu Anguo’s chapter one and three of *Chunqiu zhuan* [Interpretation of *Spring and Autumn Annals*], cited in Zhu Hanmin’s *Huxiang xuepai yu Yuelu shuyuan* (Beijing: 1991), pp. 59-60.

⁵² The translation of *xinfa* is referred to Theodore de Bary, see his book *The message of the mind in Neo-Confucianism*, N.Y. & London: Columbia University Press, 1989.

⁵³ Hu Anguo, “chapter three” of *Chunqiu zhuan* [Interpretation of *Spring and Autumn Annals*], Cf. Zhu Hanmin, *Huxiang xuepai yu Yuelu shuyuan* (Beijing: 1991), p. 60.

⁵⁴ Zhu Hanmin, *Huxiang xuepai yu Yuelu shuyuan* (Beijing: 1991), pp. 49-50. Tillman, pp. 21-23.

crisis.⁵⁶ Hu's study of the Confucian classics and history was thus impelled not only by scholarly motives, but also by the ideal of *jingshi*, the central pragmatic motive of the Confucian tradition. This practical orientation can also be seen in his uncompromising hostility to Buddhism, whose value orientation was marked by the passive ideal of withdrawal from society.

The Hu family's tradition of Confucian scholarship and historiography, begun by Hu Anguo, was continued by his sons and nephews, notably, his son Hu Hong who was taught by his father and then studied briefly under Yang Shi. Hu was also acquainted with Hou Shisheng; both Yang and Hou were important disciples of the Cheng brothers.⁵⁷ He declined all offers to official posts because he did not want to have any dealings with the government under Prime Minister Qin Gui 秦桧 who was notorious for his framing of General Yue Fei and for his capitulationism. He chose to teach for over twenty years in the *Heng* mountain area of Hunan, an economic and intellectual frontier, in order to transmit the Confucian Way. Inheriting the Hu family's tradition centred around his father, history was one of his major interests. He vividly depicted the relationship between the Classics and history by drawing the analogy of limbs and trunk for the Classics and of arteries and veins for history.⁵⁸ He believed that the Classics could hardly contain meanings divorced from facts. And the meaning of historical facts and events could not be discovered without an understanding of the Classics.

Exploring Neo-Confucian moral metaphysics was Hu Hong's other major concern. Drawing upon his family's scholarly tradition, the Cheng brothers, and the thoughts of Zhou Dunyi and Zhang Zai, Hu Hong developed his own more sophisticated metaphysics. In his major work *Zhiyan* 知言 (Understanding words), one of the most important moral-metaphysical works of the early Southern Song Neo-Confucianism and also one which caused a great deal of dispute between Zhu Xi and the Hunan

⁵⁵ "Hu Anguo" (Biography of Hu Anguo), *Song shi* [History of the Song Dynasty], *Liezhu* vol. 194, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977, pp. 12908-12928.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ "Songshi Hu Hong zhuan" (Biography of Hu Hong in the *History of the Song Dynasty*), cited in *Hu Hong ji* [Collected works of Hu Hong], (Beijing, 1987), p. 352.

⁵⁸ Hu Hong, "Prefect" to *Huangwang daji* 皇王太極 [The Great records of emperors and kings], *Hu Hong ji* [Collected works of Hu Hong], (Beijing, 1987), pp. 164-5.

fellowship after his death.⁵⁹ Hu's speculative philosophy centred on the idea of *xin-xing* (mind-and-heart and human nature).

As *qi* (氣, material force) was to Zhang Zai's metaphysics, *li* (理 principle) to Cheng Yi's and *xin* (心 mind/heart) to Lu Xiangshan's, *xing* (性 human nature) was viewed by Hu Hong as the "great foundation of all under Heaven," "from it Heaven and earth are established."⁶⁰ As the "essence of Heaven and Earth," human nature contained everything, and everything was contained in it. "There is no thing outside nature and no nature outside things."⁶¹ Even *li* (principle) and *qi* (material force, vital energy or ether) were grounded in it.⁶² Human nature was also viewed as a reality, which was static and still, and could not be manifested and actualised without *xin*. In other words, *xing* and *xin* were two aspects of one reality. "Designating its substance the sage calls it 'nature.' Designating its function he calls it 'mind.' Nature cannot be active, only the mind is active. The sage transmitted the mind and taught the world by *ren* (humanity)."⁶³

In Hu's thought the mind was given a special significance. Mind denoted the moral consciousness and quality of knowing and thinking, which enabled human beings to be differentiated from other beings.⁶⁴ Furthermore, mind was the embodiment of the abstract nature. Objectively, it was nature; and subjectively it was mind. "Mind is what penetrates heaven and earth and rules the ten thousand things in order to

⁵⁹ See his "Preface" to his compiled *Zhouzi Tongshu* [Maser Zhou's *Penetrating the Book of Changes*] and "Hengqu Zhengmeng" [Master Zhang's *Correcting the youth ignorance*] in *Hu Hong ji*, pp. 160-3.

⁶⁰ Zhu Xi "Huzi zhiyan yiyi" (Questioning of Hu Hong's "Understanding Words"), *Hu Hong ji* [Collected works of Hu Hong], p. 328, 333. For the translation see C. Schirokauer, p. 487.

⁶¹ Chapter "Shiwu" (things and matter) of *Zhiyan*, in *Hu Hong ji*, p. 22. For the translation see C. Schirokauer, p. 487.

⁶² "How great is nature! The ten thousand principles are complete in it. ... When ordinary scholars speak of nature, they all alike discuss it with reference to a single principle. None of them was seen the total substance of what heaven imparts." *Hu Hong ji* p. 28. For the translation see *ibid*. With the reference of relation between *xing* and *qi*, Hu Hong states explicitly, "if it were not for the nature, there would be no things. If it were not for the *qi* (vital force), there would be no forms. As for the nature, it is the root of the *qi* (vital force). Chapter "Shiwu" (things and matter) of *Zhiyan* (Understanding words), in *Hu Hong ji*, p. 22. For the translation see C. Schirokauer, p. 487.

⁶³ Zhu Xi "Huzi zhiyan yiyi" in *Hu Hong ji*, p. 336. For the translation see *ibid*, p. 490.

⁶⁴ Hu Hong states that "The reason why a person is not humane is that he has lost his originally good mind." *Wufeng ji* (The Complete Four Libraries Collection ed.) p. 5.43b. For the cognitive function of *xin* see his chapter 5 "wanglai" (coming and going) of "Zhiyan" [Understanding the words], p. 14. And "There is this mind and then we have knowledge; without this mind, there is no knowledge." See *ibid*, p. 11. For the translation see C. Schirokauer, pp. 491, 490.

actualise nature (成性 *chengxing*).⁶⁵ Thus, the “exertion of mind to the utmost” (尽心 *jinxin*), rather than nature, was emphasised by Hu Hong. This oneness mode of thinking was also applied in the interpretation of other concepts, such as *li* (principle) and *yi* (righteousness).⁶⁶

Furthermore, from the passage above, apart from the function of cognition, the commanding role over nature and even the myriad things was assigned to the mind.⁶⁷ In *Mencius*, the *Doctrine of the Mean* and Zhou Dunyi’s *Penetrating the Book of Changes*, the position of the individual mind had already been raised. The mind was now given even more importance, as that which enabled the completion of nature, because of its active and spontaneous role.⁶⁸

This commanding and subjective mind was immanent in everyone and transcendent, for it was not subject to life and death.⁶⁹ Like Zhou Dunyi’s ontological concept of *cheng* mentioned above, the mind was to be elevated to a kind of cosmic agent which enabled man to participate in the creative process of the cosmos, for it “provided the myriad things.” “There is nothing in the world greater than the mind, the trouble lies in not being able to extend it,” Hu Hong claimed.⁷⁰

Furthermore, Hu also placed the mind at the core of his doctrine of self-cultivation. *Ren* (humanity) was regarded as the “mind of heaven and earth” and hence was the inexhaustible source of moral creation. On the other hand, *ren* was the “way of *xin*.”⁷¹

⁶⁵ Cited in Zhu Xi, “Huzi zhiyan yiyi” in *Hu Hong ji*, p. 328. By the “six junzi” Hu referred to Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wenwang, and Confucius. The sentence is based on Mou Zongsan’s understanding of Hu’s passage. See, Mou, Book 2, pp. 446-454. Therefore, my translation differs from that of Schirokauer, see his translation, p. 490.

⁶⁶ Hu Hong wrote, “What heaven imparts to man is *li* (principle), and human mind (*renxin*) is *yi* (righteousness).” “By the practising of *yi*, *li* is illuminated.” See his “Understanding Words,” chapter 11 “yili” (righteousness and principle), in *Hu Hong ji*, p. 29.

⁶⁷ This point is reiterated more clearly in passages elsewhere, such as, “the *qi* is ruled by the nature; the nature is ruled by the mind. When the mind is pure, the nature is settled, and the *qi* is corrected.” Hu Hong, “Understanding Words” in *Hu Hong ji*, p. 16, Schirokauer, p. 490. Moreover, “the myriad things (万物 *wanwu*) are generated by Heaven; the myriad affairs (万事 *wanshi*) are ruled by the *xin*.” See, *Zhiyan*, chapter 2 “xiushen” [Self-cultivation], in *Hu Hong ji*, p. 6.

⁶⁸ For an understanding of Hu’s view of relations between mind and nature, see Mou Zongsan, p. 438-453.

⁶⁹ Zhu Xi “Huzi zhiyan yiyi” in *Hu Hong ji*, p. 333. Furthermore, it “assisted heaven and earth, and provided the ten thousand things.” It could “deal with social interactions based on the transformation of the Way of Heaven.” See *Ibid.*, p. 331.

⁷⁰ Hu Hong, “Zhiyan” [Understanding words] in *Hu Hong ji*, p. 25. For the translation see Hoyt Tillman, p. 32.

⁷¹ Hu Hong, “Zhiyan” in *Hu Hong ji*, p. 4, 1.

Therefore, Hu considered the exerting of the moral mind to the utmost as the way to achieve *ren*.⁷² For Hu Hong, *xin* was equivalent to *renxin* (仁心 mind of humanity) and the substance of *xin* was the substance of *ren* (仁体 *renti*). Drawing upon Cheng Hao's idea of "understanding the substance of *ren* (识仁体 *shi renti*)" Hu gave primacy to understanding the substance of *ren* in his doctrine of self-cultivation. For Hu Hong, as for Cheng Hao, this denoted looking into the self and being aware of the original moral mind (本心 *benxin*) within oneself instead of investigating it in outside things, which became one of the major issues between Zhu Xi and the Hunan fellowship.

In this sense Hu reaffirmed Mencius' idea of "seeking the lost mind" as the starting point of self-cultivation. The way to realize *ren* (humanity) was interpreted as "holding fast to it and preserving it, preserving it and nourishing it, nourishing it and fulfilling it so that it becomes enlarged. When it is great and cannot be stopped, it will be identical to Heaven. Hu, unlike Zhu Xi, put full trust in the mind and believed moral insight derived from "an intuitive experience of self-identification with the moral and creative force of the universe."⁷³ In other words, it was not attainable through intellectual means alone.

Hu's approach to the attainment of inner-sagehood (内圣功夫 *neisheng gongfu*) is described by Mou Zongsan as *neizai de nijue tizheng* 内在的逆觉体证 (an experiential verification through immanent retrospective enlightenment).⁷⁴ The first clue of this approach could be found in Confucius' idea of "seeking humaneness by looking into the self (求仁由己 *qiuren youji*)." In *Mencius* it was described as "seeking the lost mind" and in *Zhongyong* it was revealed in the process of "sincerity resulting from enlightenment" (自明诚 *zi ming cheng*).⁷⁵ Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai and Cheng Hao

⁷² Hu cited Confucius as an example, saying, "The sage, like Confucius, who 'could follow his heart desired without transgressing what is right,' could be said to have attained a state of 'exerting the moral mind to the utmost.'" Hu Hong, "Zhiyan" in *Hu Hongji*, p. 10. For the quotation see *Analects* (2.4), translated in James Legge, p. 147.

⁷³ C. Schirokauer, p. 491.

⁷⁴ Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingtai* [The substance of mind and the substance of human nature] (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1968-9) Vol. 2 p. 430. For a detailed discussion see pp. 474-484. For translation of the term see Tu Weiming, "Mind and Human nature" (review article) in his *Humanity and self-cultivation: Essays in Confucian thought*, (Berkeley, 1979) p. 117. The article originally appeared in *Journal of Asian Studies*, 30 (May 1971): pp. 624-47.

⁷⁵ In the former it was addressed in such basic ideas of Mencius as the innateness of *ren* (humanity) and *yi* (righteousness), seeking the lost mind and being conscious of *cheng* (sincerity) through self-examination. In the latter it was set forth in two pivotal theses of *zhongyong*, "the superior man was watchful over himself when he is alone," (慎独 *shendu*) and to the realisation of

were very much in line with the Mencian tradition, since they all talked about the moral effort repaired to attain inner sagehood from the point of view of metaphysical reality. This was very different from Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi's conception of self-cultivation with its stress on the empirical scope of investigation and knowing. Although, in general, both approaches have been designated by modern scholars as "internalised transcendence", (内在的超越 *neizaide chaoyue*) in contrast to the characteristic Western concept of "externalised transcendence" (外在的超越 *waizaide chaoyue*), they in fact represented two distinct approaches within the Neo-Confucian tradition.⁷⁶ Assimilating the Mencian idea of seeking the lost mind and Cheng Hao's emphasis on the substance of humanity (识仁体 *shi renti*) into his philosophy, Hu Hong intensified and refined this tradition in his philosophy. It should be noted that it is distinct from the Lu-Wang school (school of mind) as well.⁷⁷

However, to "exert the mind to the utmost" was neither an abstract concept nor empty talk. Based on his assumption of the inseparability of the Way from actual things in his metaphysics,⁷⁸ Hu insisted that the discovery of the original moral mind was not to be divorced from the everyday matters that marked his doctrine of self-cultivation. Although Zhang Shi differed in certain main aspects from Hu Hong, Zhang was entirely consistent with the tradition began by Hu, that is, to criticise "empty talk about mind and human nature" and to emphasise examining oneself and making an

equilibrium (centrality, mean) and harmony to the highest degree" (致中和 *zhi zhonghe*). See Mou Zongsan, p. 429

⁷⁶ Yu Yingshi, "Cong jiazhixitong kan Zhongguo wenhua de xiandai yiyi" 从价值系统看中国文化的现代意义 [To view the implication of modernity in Chinese culture from the perspective of a system of value], in his *Zhongguo sixiang chuantong de xiandai quanshi* [Modern interpretation of the tradition of Chinese thought], Taipei: Jinlian shiye gongsi, 1995 (the seventh printing; 1984, the 1st edition), pp. 7-16.

⁷⁷ Mou Zongsan called the metaphysic-idealistic wing the "authentic line," and distinguished further the stream that began with Zhou Dunyi and included Zhang Zai, Cheng Hao, Hu Hong in the Song and Liu Zongzhou in the Ming from that of the Lu-Wang school. Mou argued that Lu and Wang talked about one aspect of the mind, i.e. the subjective aspect, while Zhou, Zhang, Cheng and Hu approached the problem by adding the ontological and cosmological dimensions. Mou named the orientation led by Cheng I and Zhu Xi as the "actual line." Thus his view is contrary to the commonly accepted dichotomy of the Neo-Confucian tradition: Cheng-Zhu school (the rationalist school) and Lu-Wang school (the idealist school or school of mind). See Mou, Book 1, pp. 42-54.

⁷⁸ In chapter 3 of "Zhiyan" Hu states "The Way itself cannot exist of itself apart from things, and [in turn] things can not exist of themselves without the Way. The Way has things like the wind has motion or water has a current. Who can separate them? Therefore to seek the Way apart from things is simply absurd." In Hu Hong, *dao* is not an abstract concept, but rather a reality. See *Hu Hong ji*, p. 4., C. Schirokauer, p. 488.

effort in one's daily life and daily moral practice.⁷⁹ This tradition can be found in many Hunanese Confucianists in the Qing dynasty, such as Wang Fuzhi, Tang Jian, and Zeng Guofan.

After the death of Hu Hong, Zhang Shi emerged as the leading figure of the Hunan fellowship. During the 1160s he was probably the most influential scholar not only in Hunan but also in the whole of Southern Song Neo-Confucianism.⁸⁰ During the two decades after Hu Hong's death, the development of thought of the Hunan group might be seen as coming under the influence of both Zhang Shi and Zhu Xi. In this the Yuelu Academy played an especially important role.

In 1165 after the repair and enlarging of the Yuelu Academy supported by Liu Gong (刘珙), pacification commissioner of Hunan, Zhang was invited by Liu to lecture there.⁸¹ During a seven-year period of teaching at Yuelu, Zhang used it as a centre to "transmit the Way" (传道 *chuandao*) through "teaching" (授业 *shouye*) and intellectual dialogue (解惑 *jiehuo*), instead of simply a place to prepare for the civil service examinations.⁸² According to *Song Yuan xue'an*, there were over forty students, including some from Sichuan, studying under Zhang Shi.⁸³ It was during this period that the Hunan school reached its apogee in terms of the extent and scope of its influence.

The exchange of views between Zhang Shi and Zhu Xi through letters and personal meetings influenced the thoughts of both scholars. Among their personal meetings, that of 1167 was the most important.⁸⁴ In the autumn of 1167 Zhu Xi travelled to Hunan to meet Zhang Shi. The two-month visit in Hunan enabled the two men to have intensive discussions about the issues with which they were most concerned and

⁷⁹ Tillman, p. 56, 61.

⁸⁰ Zhu Xi praised him as having the "virtue of *daoxue*" and as being a "pure Confucian." See *Zhuji wenji*, 81.2. Cited in Tillman, p. 43.

⁸¹ Zhu Hanmin, p. 111-5.

⁸² Zhu Xi, "Cuozi Yuelu shuyuan die 措置岳麓书院牒 [Official note of arrangement of the Yuelu Academy] in *Zhuji wenji*, cited in Zhu Hanmin, p. 113.

⁸³ Zhang Shi was a native of Sichuan. See Zhu Hanmin, p. 123. According to his statistics based on the "Yuelu zhuru xue'an", there were thirty-three disciples, and also more than a dozen coming from Sichuan based on the "Liangjian zhuru xue'an."

⁸⁴ The other two meetings were in 1163 and 1164. See Jiang Licai "Chunru Zhang Nanxuan de xiangxue," [The scholarship of Zhang Shi, a pure Confucian, and the Hunan School], in *Kong Meng xuebao* [Journal of Confucius and Mencius Society of the Republic of China], 36 (Sept. 1978): 170-1. Tillman, p. 63.

to give lectures together (会讲 *huijiang*) at the Yuelu Academy. Their focus was on three major issues of importance to Neo-Confucianism, that is, the *Zhongyong*'s critical idea of equilibrium and harmony (中和说 *zhonghe shuo*) in self-cultivation, Hu Hong's ideas of mind and human nature, and the ideal of humanity.⁸⁵ Later Lü Zuqian, a leading figure of the *Jiangxi* school, also became involved in the debate. Although Zhu Xi was critical of certain points of the Hunanese doctrine of self-cultivation, he embraced certain others. Half of his famous characterization of humanity came directly from Zhang Shi.⁸⁶ Zhu Xi had incorporated the Hunanese approach to apprehending principles in daily activity into his doctrine of self-cultivation; however, he violently objected to Hu Hong's assumption that nature went beyond the distinction between good and evil and that the Heavenly principles and human desires shared the same essence but differed in function. In general, the Hunan school was one of the most important sources of inspiration for Zhu when he formulated a more comprehensive and systematic version of Neo-Confucianism.⁸⁷ After Zhang Shi's death, Zhu himself edited and published a collection of Zhang Shi's works and wrote the memorial address.

Zhu Xi's profound and perennial influence on the Hunanese intellectual world was also due to his official appointment to Hunan as pacification commissioner of Jinhu South (荆湖南路按察使 *jinhu nanlu anchashi*) based at Tanzhou (潭州 present Changsha, Hunan) in the spring of 1194. During his tenure, though it was short, Zhu gave the order to restore and revive the Yuelu Academy, in which he also lectured (It was said that the lecture hall was fully occupied, even outside was crowded with standing students.).⁸⁸ From this time on, Zhu Xi had been honoured especially by the teachers and students of Yuelu Academy. This might be the reason why the Zhu School was a major inspiration for Hunan scholarship.⁸⁹ Zhu Xi and Zhang Shi were

⁸⁵ For a detailed discussion of the exchange of views between Zhang and Zhu see Tillman, pp. 59-82.

⁸⁶ Tillman, p. 262.

⁸⁷ Professor Tillman strove to give a balanced view to judge the result of the academic exchanges between Zhu and in order to revise the widely accepted assertion by Chinese and Japanese scholars. He stressed the interaction and Zhang's contribution to the evolution of Zhu's thought instead. See chapter 3, pp. 59-82.

⁸⁸ Li Xiaodan, *Xiangxue lüe* [An outline of history of Hunanese scholarship] pp. 131-2. For the English translation of the official title and the date see Chan, Wing-tsit, "Biography of Chu Hsi," in *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism* (1986), p. 598.

⁸⁹ See Li Xiaodan, *Xiangxue lüe* [An outline of history of Hunanese scholarship] p. 143.

ranked as being of equal status and were highly respected by the Hunanese literati of later generations.

After Zhang's death, his students went to study under other masters and the Hunan School began to languish. However its intellectual legacy survived in Hunan's academies, particularly the Yuelu Academy.⁹⁰ That Hunan was much less influenced than other provinces by the bookish textual and philological scholarship (考证 *kaozheng*) prevailing in the Mid-Qing may be the best evidence of the Hunan School's legacy. It is also conceivable that the revival of the Cheng-Zhu School of Neo-Confucianism in the late Qing was inaugurated by a group of Hunanese scholar-officials: Tang Jian 唐鉴 (1778-1861) and his student, Zeng Guofan, who was to emerge as the prominent Confucian scholar-commander during the suppression of the Taiping rebellion in the mid-nineteenth century and the pioneer of the subsequent self-strengthening movement. He left a far more profound and far-reaching influence on the Hunanese intellectual world than his teacher had done.

The revival of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism in the early nineteenth century

The revival of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism can be seen on the one hand as a reaction against the indifference of the Empirical Research School to the socio-political commitment of Confucianism, and on the other hand, as the manifestation of a deepening sense of cultural malaise attributed to the careerism and tendency for abstruse metaphysical debate prevalent among literary figures. These Confucian scholars of Song Learning felt a pressing need to reaffirm the neglected Confucian idea of taking inner sagehood as the starting point of governing state. This is nowhere more clearly shown than in the thought of Tang Jian, encapsulated in two phrases: "maintain the Way in order to save the world" (守道救世 *shoudao jiushi*) and "cultivation of moral character" (修身 *xiushen*).⁹¹

⁹⁰ Zhu Hanmin, pp. 189-241. See also Susan M. Jones and Philip A Kuhn, "The decline of the Ch'ing dynasty and the origin of the rebellion," in *Cambridge history of China*, vol. 10, pp.157-9.

⁹¹ Hellmut Wilhelm, "Chinese Confucianism on the eve of the great encounter," in Marius B. Jansen, ed., *Changing Japanese Attitudes toward Modernization* (Princeton, 1965), p. 299. The translation of the first phrase is cited in Hao Chang's *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Intellectual transition in China, 1890-1907*, p. 16, instead of Wilhelm's one, for Chang's translation is more faithful to the original text in terms of semantics and its implications. The second phrase is adopted from Wilhelm, as in consideration of the "character-building program" it designates the characteristic of Tang Jian's teaching of self-cultivation more directly and clearly than Hao Chang's usage of the general English translation "self-cultivation."

The other part of the phrase, *jiushi* (to save the world) indicated that Tang's thought was also fuelled by the socio-political commitment of Confucianism. But Tang and his followers' socio-political approach to statecraft was quite different from that of members of the school of statesmanship, such as Hunanese scholar-officials He Changling 贺长龄 (1785-1850) and Wei Yuan, who emphasised administrative reform. Tang conceived of the socio-political vocation of the *junzi* mainly in terms of moral self-cultivation, that is, viewing personal moral perfection as the key approach to establish the ideal order. It was based firmly on the belief of an exemplary elite and its power of moral charisma to transform society and manage the world.⁹² This emphasis was manifested clearly in his curriculum, which was based on his criticism of the prevailing three-part approach toward Confucian scholarship. He held that "What 'textual criticism' was concerned which was only the dross and what it discarded was the cream of Confucianism. Only those who mastered the moral philosophy of self-cultivation (义理之学 *yili zhi xue*) would have a good command of poetic literature (文章 *wenzhang*)."⁹³ Therefore, he classified the study of statecraft, (经济之学 *jingji zhi xue*) under the study of the moral philosophy of self-cultivation.⁹³

In addition to Cheng Yi's idea of reverence (敬 *jing*), Tang's idea of individual moral cultivation drew largely upon Zhou Dunyi's concept of *cheng*, of "restraining one's wrath and repressing one's desire" (惩忿制欲 *chengfen zhiyu*) and "moving towards good and correcting one's mistakes," (迁善改过 *qianshan gaiguo*).⁹⁴ Tang simplified the last two approaches in his formula of self-cultivation: lessening desires (寡欲 *guayu*) and lessening faults (寡过 *guaguo*). And these two approaches were involved in an ascetic process of self-discipline of the mind.⁹⁵

The Hunan School's tradition of self-cultivation that focused on cultivating the mind, examining oneself and making an effort in daily life was actually perpetuated by

⁹² Hao Chang, "On the Ching-shih ideal in Neo-Confucianism" in *Ch'ing-shih wen-ti*, 3.1(1974):43-5.

⁹³ This idea was expressed in a conversation with Zeng Guofan. Zeng recorded the talk in his diary, see *Zeng Guofan riji*, entry of fourteenth day of seventh month 1841. Cited in He Yikun, *Zeng Guofan pingzhuan* [A critical biography of Zeng Guofan], (Taipei: Zhengzhong Shuju, 1964, 3rd edition) p. 202.

⁹⁴ Chiu Wei-chun, pp. 108-113.

⁹⁵ Tang held that the perverseness of one's mind was the cause of making one lose one's temper, adopt a stern countenance, or resort to hasty speech and unrestrained behaviour. See Chiu Wei-chun, p. 118.

these nineteenth-century Hunanese scholar-officials of Song Learning. However it now took the form of *xingshen rike* (省身日课 a daily lesson of self-introspection) and a “character-building programme.” In their hands, the diary technique as a means of introspection and self-examination, which had been started by the early Qing scholars of Song learning, such as Lu Longqi 陆陇其 (1630-1693) under the influence of the Ming scholars such as Lü Kun 吕坤 (1535-1618) and Yuan Huang 袁黄 (1533-1606), was further developed.⁹⁶ Zeng Guofan’s diary was a representative work of Tang’s approach to self-cultivation.⁹⁷

Neither Tang, nor his students Wo Ren 倭仁 (1804-1871) and Zeng Guofan had an interest in metaphysical speculation. Rather they were devout practitioners of self-cultivation. Perhaps no others had elaborated such a systematic and detailed project of self-cultivation, which was referred to as a “character-building programme.” Wo Ren was the initiator and Zeng was a sincere and painstaking practitioner.⁹⁸ It aimed at knowing the true self and the inner nature imparted by Heaven through everyday self-examination or self-retrospection. The “moral mind” (本心 *benxin*) could be lost or blurred, however, through a painstaking process of self-discipline and self-mastering this “moral mind” could be got back and then one could become an autonomous being. Of course, this is nothing new, since the idea of personal autonomy is a deep-rooted value in the Confucian tradition. But they proceeded, as Hellmut Wilhelm noted, “with an uncanny, if undefined, knowledge of the unconscious reaches of the self.” Self-cultivation thus became a process of self-consciousness and self-knowledge directed by introspection carrying a modern psychological ring.⁹⁹ They felt the real challenge to the realisation of the true self, did not come from the external world but from inner selfishness and all improper thought. The self-restraint and self-

⁹⁶ Hellmut Wilhelm, “Chinese Confucianism on the eve of the great encounter,” in Marius B. Jansen, ed., *Changing Japanese Attitudes toward Modernization* (Princeton, 1965), p. 293. Lu was entrusted by the Qing government to edit and publish Lü’s works, see Joanna F. Handlin, *Action in late Ming thought*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983, pp. 9-11.

⁹⁷ There are several examples in Zeng’s diaries that show the detailed records of Zeng’s daily digging up the secret thought and motivation which lay behind his mistakes and shortcomings in order to improve himself. He kept this kind of diary from January 1st, 1839 to March, 1872 – the day before he died. See Teng Ssu-yu, “Tseng Kuo-fan” in *Reading in Modern Chinese history* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) p. 183. For instance, in his diary entry of 1842, Zeng recorded his deep regret and self-reproach for being unable to control his excessive sexual desires in his marriage relationship. See *Zeng Guofan quanji*, “jiashu” (Family letters), p. 130, in Chiu Wei-chun, p. 220.

⁹⁸ For the discussion of “character-building programme” available in English see Chiu Wei-chun, esp. pp. 149-161.

mastery (克己 *keji*) were directed towards achieving a strong will. On this ground they advocated a project of moral character building in order to be able to carry out the *junzi*'s mission of world transformation. Unlike the Promethean Western version of heroism, which aimed at conquering the outside natural world, the Confucian one targeted the inner world of the individual. They believed that a selfless man was a fearless man. Being self-determined and independent such a man should not be deterred even though the whole world opposed him.¹⁰⁰

It should be noted here that it is misleading to portray these men as prudish, narrow-minded, nostalgic and conservative Confucian dogmatists. As was mentioned above, the revival of Neo-Confucian moral philosophy was also accompanied by an emphasis on the ideal of practicality (经世致用 *jingshi zhiyong*) that was rooted in the Confucian tradition. They were men of action and energetic, capable and honest officials. Their emphasis on practical orientation was manifested in their realistic approach to everyday affairs, for Zeng Guofan and members of his eminent Hunanese group should also be seen as active reformers.¹⁰¹ The influence of Zeng Guofan and the Hunanese tradition of honouring Song moral philosophy of self-cultivation meant that the revival of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism gained considerable influence in the Hunan intellectual world towards the end of the nineteenth century. Zeng was a hero to many young Hunanese, including Yang Changji.

The influence of Wang Fuzhi's thought

At the turn of the nineteenth century Wang Fuzhi's thought became another important source of inspiration not only for the Hunanese literati, but also for the Chinese intellectual world as a whole.¹⁰²

Wang Fuzhi, a native of Hengyang, Hunan, was born into a scholar family. He studied under Wu Daoxing 吴道行 at Yuelu Academy in 1638. Wu was the descendent of Wu Jie 吴杰, a disciple of Zhang Shi. Wu Daoxing himself was a graduate of Yuelu

⁹⁹ Hellmut Wilhelm, p. 302.

¹⁰⁰ This point I will return in the chapter 9.

¹⁰¹ For instance, Zeng Guofan and Zuo Zongtang were forerunners advocating the borrowing of Western technology.

¹⁰² Susan M. Jones and Philip A. Kuhn, "Origin of decline of the Ch'ing dynasty and rebellion," in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 10, p. 158. Hao Chang provides a detailed account of Wang Fuzhi's influence on Tan Sitong. See his *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis*, Berkeley: 1987. pp.43, 72-3, 81-4, 87-94.

Academy.¹⁰³ He received the *juren* degree at the age of twenty-four (1642). In 1648 when Qing troops entered Hunan, he raised a resistance army at Hengshan. After two years service for the Southern Ming court under Prince Gui in Guangxi and Guangdong, he realised the hopelessness of the Ming cause and returned to his native home, Hengyang. He chose to live in solitude on Mount Shichuan (石船). Refusing to have any dealings with the Manchus he devoted himself to study for the next forty years. *Chuanshan*, his best-known literary name was taken from this mountain.¹⁰⁴

As one of the three most important and outstanding philosophers and thinkers at the end of the Ming and the beginning of the Qing, Wang Fuzhi produced the most comprehensive and elaborate system of metaphysics since that of Zhu Xi.¹⁰⁵ He was also an eminent scholar of history and historiography. He wrote voluminous commentaries on the Chinese Classics, history and literature in which he formulated a philosophical criticism of Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming, Laozi's Taoism and Chan Buddhism; he expounded an evolutionary, materialistic and nationalist view of history and evinced a critical attitude towards despotism.¹⁰⁶ The development of Chinese thought from the end of the Ming witnessed a great change. This shift may be seen in the following three aspects: There was a move away (1) from depth of thought to breadth of thought; (2) from concentration on the spiritual and moral life to a consideration of natural and social life, (3) and from inward reflection and personal experience to a reliance on historical documents.¹⁰⁷ Wang Fuzhi's thought embodied this change. Nonetheless, unlike Gu Yanwu and Huang Zongxi, he was little known in his own time because of his isolation and hostility toward the reigning dynasty.

¹⁰³ Zhu Hanmin, pp. 221-2.

¹⁰⁴ Arthur, W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1943-4) II, 817.

¹⁰⁵ Qian Mu, *Zhongguo jin sanbainian xueshu shi* [A history of Chinese scholarship in the past three hundred years], Shanghai: the Commercial Press, 1937, p. 96. Yan, Shoucheng, "Coherence and contradiction in the worldview of Wang Fuzhi" (PhD. D diss.) Indiana university, 1994, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ For Wang's distinctive idea of history see He Lin "Wang Chuanshan de lishi zhexue" [Wang Fuzhi's philosophy of history], in *Zhexue pinglun* [Philosophical review], 10, (1935):23-29, Ji Wenfu, *Wang Chuanshan xueshu luncong* [Collected essays on the scholarship and thought of Wang Fuzhi] (Beijing: sanlian shudian, 1978) pp 122-163, and Teng Ssu-yu, "Wang Fu-chih's views on History and Historical Writing" in *Journal of Asian Studies* 28.1 (1968), 111-123.

¹⁰⁷ Tang Ch'ün-I, "The development of ideas of spiritual value in Chinese philosophy" in Charles A. Moore, ed. *The Chinese Mind: Essentials of Chinese Philosophy and Culture* (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii, 1967), p. 208

Following the publication of his major works at Changsha in 1840-42, the significance of his thought was gradually recognised. These works became one of the most important sources of intellectual inspiration for the reformers of 1898, as well as for the nationalists and revolutionaries at the turn of the twentieth century. Of particular influence was Wang's passionate nationalism, his evolutionary idea of history and his theory of necessary social and political change to meet the present needs.¹⁰⁸

With Zeng's support, a more complete collection of Wang's works were published by the Jiangnan Printing Office in Nanjing in 1864-66; this facilitated a wider circulation of Wang's works and a broader dissemination of his thought. Wang's thought was taught in Hunanese academies and formed a component of the curriculum for Hunan's Neo-Confucian students.¹⁰⁹ Wei Yuan was profoundly influenced by Wang Fuzhi, a fact overlooked by the modern studies of both men. Due to his personal acquaintance with Zou Hanxun 邹汉勋 (1805-1854), sponsor and publisher of Wang Fuzhi's works, and Deng Xianhe 邓显鹤 (1777-1851), Wei read the draft of the *Complete Works of Wang Fuzhi* prior to its publication.¹¹⁰ Wei referred to Wang Fuzhi in his important works regarding Confucian classics and Chinese current politics, such as *Shu guwei* 书古微 [The subtle ancient meaning hidden in the *Book of History*] and *Mo Gu* 默觚 [Hidden Corners].¹¹¹ He praised Wang's *Shi Guang zhuan* 诗广传 [A interpretation of the *Book of Odes* in broad sense], saying, "Full of penetrating insights and excellent ideas, although Wang's *Shi Guang Zhuan* does not draw upon the 'Three Commentaries' they often hold identical views."¹¹² Some of Wei's key philosophical ideas underlying his political reformism, such as the ceaseless change of the universe, *qi*-only monism, the evolutionary view of history and the violent criticism of those who despised and

¹⁰⁸ Ian McMorran, "Wang Fu-chih and the Neo-Confucian tradition" in *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, (N. Y. & London: Columbia University Press, 1975), pp. 413-4. de Bary, (ed.) *Sources of Chinese tradition* (1963), p.597.

¹⁰⁹ For the publication detail, see Zeng Guofan, "*Chuanshan yishu xu*" [Preface to *Posthumous writings of Wang Fuzhi*]. For Wang Fuzhi study in Hunan, see Li, Xiaodan, *Xiangxue lue* [An outline of history of Hunanese scholarship], (Changsha: 1985), p.151.

¹¹⁰ See Wei's letter to Deng and Zou in *Wei Yuan ji* [Works of Wei Yuan] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983) pp. 921-4. "Zou Hanxun" [Biography of Zou Hanxun] in *Qingshi liezhuan*, (Beijing: 1987), pp. 5635-6. See also Li Xiaodan, *Xiangxue lue*, pp. 172-5.

¹¹¹ These two works can be found in *Wei Yuan ji*, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983. 2vols.

scorned the present while exalting the past, were remarkably similar to those of Wang Fuzhi.¹¹³

Two teachers of Tan Sitong were devoted students of Wang's philosophy and Tan himself was influenced profoundly by Wang Fuzhi. Tan's ether-based monism, his metaphysical dynamism, his moral activism and radicalism, and his inclination towards "practical learning" all evolved from his study of Wang Fuzhi's philosophy.¹¹⁴ It is very likely that Yang's first contact with Wang Fuzhi began when he read his *Zhangzi 'Zhengmeng' zhu* (Commentary on Master Zhang Zai's *Correcting Youthful Ignorance*) in 1891.¹¹⁵ During the period 1895 to 1902 before he left for study in Japan, Yang studied intensively Wang Fuzhi's most important and popular historic works *Du 'Tongjian' lun* [Comments on reading of *mirror of history*] and *Song lun* [On the history of the Song dynasty]. After Yang returned to China, Wang Fuzhi remained the source of his intellectual inspiration, manifested in the high frequency of his citation of Wang's work in his diaries, lectures and essays.¹¹⁶

In spite of Wang's isolated life style, his thought was not the "product of a recluse' pondering over the books of his forebears" but rather was a reflection on, and passionate concern about, the events taking place in the world around him.¹¹⁷ "For him Confucianism was nothing if not the philosophy of those morally committed to action relevant to the problems of the present."¹¹⁸ Living in a period of dynastic decline and alien invasion, his study was motivated by the principle of learning for practical use and exploring history for meeting present-day needs and finding guidance for the future. This is why his thought as a philosopher and historian of the seventeenth century had resonance for Chinese intellectuals, both Confucian literati and revolutionaries, in Hunan and the whole country at the end of the nineteenth

¹¹² Shi guwei mulu shuhou" (Notes after writing the content of *The subtle ancient meaning hidden in the 'Book of Odes'*) in *Wei Yuan ji*, pt. 2, p. 940-1

¹¹³ To compare these ideas of Wei with Wang see Wei's *Mo Gu* [Hidden Corners], a political work of Wei's last years and Wang's *Shangshu yinyi*, *Du Tongjian lun* and *Song lun* etc. It is highly possible that Wang's thought was the major source of inspiration for Wei's *Mo Gu*, a point overlooked by students and scholars of Wei Yuan.

¹¹⁴ Hao Chang, *Chinese Intellectual in Crisis*, (1987) pp 66-103.

¹¹⁵ Yang Changji, *Riji*, (Hunan, 1981) p. 13.

¹¹⁶ See Yang Changji, *Riji*, (Hunan, 1981), pp. 9,16, 18, 23,26,44,45,47,48,78,79, 99, 121, 161,172, 174,178, 197 and *Wenji* (Hunan, 1983), pp. 49-50,53,69,71,74,81,84,94,212,214.

¹¹⁷ Ian McMorran, "Wang Fu-chih and the Neo-Confucian tradition," *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism* (Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 413.

century and the early twentieth century when China was faced with a similar crisis albeit in a different form. Therefore, all of his work, whether philosophical or historical, expresses a strong inclination towards practical orientation. This doubtless partly resulted from his contacts with Donglin scholars in the late Ming and his interest in Zhang Zai's philosophy.¹¹⁹ Additionally, the intellectual tradition of Hunanese scholarship seems to have been another source of inspiration.

Hu Hong was one whom Wang honoured. In a discussion of the relationship between "Heavenly principle" and "human desire" Wang praised highly Hu Hong's emphasis on the inseparability of heavenly principle from human desires.

Only Buddha has tried to create principle as something separate from desires. ... Wufeng was indeed right when he said, "Heavenly principle and human desire are the same in operation but differ in circumstance (情 *qing*).” Surely this phrase combines the philosophy of Yan [Hui] (ie. disciple of Confucian) and Mencius in one source!¹²⁰

Wang made a bold assertion that "human desire" resided in "heavenly principle." "There is no such principle which can be divorced from desire."¹²¹ Moreover there are similarities between Wang and Hu Hong in certain aspects concerning the fundamental concepts of Confucianism. For instance, regarding the nature of the Way, they shared the idea of inseparability of the Way from concrete things. They also had shared common ground in the epistemological aspect of their thought regarding the relationship between "knowing" (知 *zhi*) and "practice" (行 *xing*). They were both critical of the tendency to avoid the effort of practice in acquiring knowledge and to give primacy to practice in the attainment of humanity.¹²² Furthermore, both were predominantly interested in metaphysics and history. Their

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, pp.425-459.

¹²⁰ Wang Fuzhi, *Du sishu daquan shuo* [Commentary on and notes of Complete Four Books], Beijing: Zhonghua, p. 519. Wang's quotation of Hu Hong is in Zhu Xi's "Huzi Zhiyan yiyi" in *Hu Hong ji*, p. 329. The whole sentence is "the heavenly principle and human desires are the same in substance but differ in function. They are the same in operation but differ in feeling (*qing*). The superior man who goes forth to cultivate should deeply distinguish them." Conrad Schirokauer, p. 488. There is difficulty in the translation of *qing*. To use "feeling" or "passions" as Ian McMorran did, is not logical. Therefore, I used "situation" directly as Tillman did. The translation of Wang Fuzhi's passage here comes mainly from Ian McMorran, the quotation of Hu Hong from Conrad Schirokauer.

¹²¹ Wang Fuzhi, *Du sishu daquan shuo* [Commentary on and notes of Complete Four Books], Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975, p. 519.

¹²² Wang Fuzhi, *Shangshu yinyi* [The extended meaning of the *Book of History*], vol. 3 "On fate" (Beijing: 1976), p.78. Zhang Shi, "Da Zhu Xi" [Reply Zhu Xi], *Chang Shi Nanxuan wenji* [Collected works of Zhangshi] and *Xingli daquan* [Great collection of Neo-Confucianism], vol. 49.

interest in history was a result of their response to the political turbulence of their own eras.¹²³ The similarity between the two is more than coincidence. It seems impossible that Wang Fuzhi as a scholar raised and educated in Hunan did not pay particular attention to his Hunanese Confucian predecessors and was not exposed to the intellectual legacy of the Hunan school.

As one of the harbingers of *shixue* (实学 practical learning) that flourished in the early Qing period,¹²⁴ Wang proclaimed the idea that the study of history and historical writing should aim to reveal the main principles of how to manage the world (经世之大略 *jingshi zhi dalüe*) through the evaluation of historical events.¹²⁵ He took study of the Confucian Classics as the essential starting point and the study of history as their practical application. Based on the philosophical idea of the inseparability of the *dao* (the Way) and *qi* (器 the vessel), the study of Classics (经学 *jingxue*) thus could not be divorced from the study of history. This tendency of Wang's thought became one of the most important origins of the nineteenth-century revival of the Confucian ideal of "practicality," and was often referred to as the "statecraft school" in its narrow sense.

The movement of "practical statesmanship" and Yuelu Academy

In the early nineteenth century China witnessed the emergence of the "statecraft school." The leading figures were a group of Hunanese scholars, such as He Changling and Wei Yuan. Their idea of "practical statesmanship" was elaborated on mainly in the multivolumed work *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* [Collection of Qing

¹²³ For the characteristics of Wang Fuzhi's "practical orientation" see Hao Chang (1987), pp. 71-3, and Ian McMorran. Regarding the Hunan school, see the above and Conrad Schirokauer, Tillman in English, and Zhu Hanmin, Mou Zongsan, Cai Renhuo and Jiang Licai in Chinese.

¹²⁴ Liang Qichao, *The intellectual trends in the Ch'ing period* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959) translated with Introduction and Notes by Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, pp.36-7. The other three figures to whom Liang gave the highest praise were Gu Yanwu, Huang Zongxi and Yan Yuan. Although there was no direct relationship between them, their scholarship had some features in common. The thrust of their thoughts lay in the rejuvenation of the practical strain of Confucian tradition though their scholarly interests were very different, and they were all violently critical of late Ming intellectual trends dominated by the metaphysical discussion of such abstract ideas and problems as mind-Heart and nature. See *ibid.*, chapter 2, 4, 6 and 7. Liang's view is widely accepted by modern scholars of Chinese thought. For instance, Ian McMorran and Hao Chang share the same view.

¹²⁵ See Wang Fuzhi, *Du Tongjian lun*, vol. 6, in *Chuanshan quanli* [Complete Works of Wang Fuzhi], (Taipei: 1965). Yu Yingshi even regards him as the first in the Qing dynasty to set forth the idea that the realisation of ideal of practical statesmanship could not be divorced from the study of history. See his "Qingdai xueshu sixiangshi zhongyao guannian tongshi" 清代学术思想史重要概念通释 [Studies of selected pivotal ideas in the history of the Qing scholarship], p. 425.

dynasty writings on statecraft], published in 1826. On the one hand, the emergence of the “statecraft school” can be seen as a response to the crisis of the imperial dynasty which had resulted in rampant official corruption and domestic rebellions. On the other hand, from the perspective of intellectual history, it can be viewed as a reaction against the trivial scholasticism of the school of empirical research and Han learning which had dominated the whole of the eighteenth century. The motivation behind this new trend was to call for the Confucian ideal of practical statesmanship or “outer kingship,” with an emphasis on professional statecraft as the principal approach to achieve the Confucian moral community.

It should be noted here that the rise of the statecraft school was only one aspect of a broader intellectual trend aimed revitalising the ideal of “practicality” within the framework of Confucian humanism. As Yu Yingshi observed, the emphasis on practicality was a widely shared attitude among all early Qing scholars. This sense of practical statesmanship was de-emphasized during the course of the eighteenth century when the trends of scholasticism or philological and textual research prevailed. Nevertheless, the ideal of “practical statesmanship” was not completely forgotten among the pre-eminent scholars of the school of empirical research. For instance, in the thought of Dai Zheng, Qian Daxin 钱大昕 (1728-1804), Wang Zhong 汪中 (1744-1794) the ideal of *jingshi* still occupied an important place.¹²⁶

However, a new trend to conceive statecraft as institutional change in terms of administrative rather than political renovation moved to the centre stage. Professional statesmanship, people’s livelihood, and national wealth and power were the main concerns of this movement. The motivation was their concern that inner moral cultivation and exemplary leadership were not sufficient to solve the problem of harsh reality; the professional statecraft and institutional approach should be added.¹²⁷ In the curriculum of the nineteenth-century literati the significant category of *jingshi*, a subject concerning economic-political, financial, military, and administrative affairs, was added. This distinctive approach to attaining Confucian statesmanship and its underlying ethical outlook on order and statecraft were

¹²⁶ Yu Yingshi, “Qingdai xueshu sixiangshi zhongyao guannian tongshi” [Studies of selected pivotal ideas in the history of scholarship and thought in the Qing period], pp. 422-9.

¹²⁷ Hao Chang, *Liang Ch’i-ch’ao*, (1971), p. 26

remarkable enough to distinguish itself from the so-called “normative approach of Confucian statesmanship” or “moral statesmanship” of the other schools of the nineteenth century.¹²⁸

The majority of leading figures and active proponents of this movement were Hunanese and graduates of Yuelu Academy, for instance, He Changling, Tao Shu 陶澍 (1779-1839), Yan Ruyi 严如煜 (1759-1826), and Wei Yuan of the first generation; Zeng Guofan, Hu Linyi 胡林翼 (1812-1861), Zuo Zongtang and Guo Songtao of the second generation.¹²⁹ It is not a historical accident that Hunan became one of the intellectual centres for promoting the ideal of practical statesmanship.

The concern for statecraft in Hunan was reflected in two main currents of thought before the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864). Although they overlapped with each other to a certain degree for a time they were distinct.¹³⁰ One was marked by a stress on moral leadership, what Hao Chang has called: a “normative approach to statecraft” or “moral statesmanship”, present in the thought of Tang Jian. The other one was the so-called “practical statesmanship” present in the writings of He Changling, Tao Shu and Wei Yuan. From the 1860s onwards the two trends tended to merge into a broad eclectic synthesis because of Zeng Guofan, whose thought became the orthodox

¹²⁸ Hao Chang, “On ching-shih ideal in Neo-Confucianism” (1974), pp. 44-6.

¹²⁹ He Changling and his brother He Xiling 贺熙龄 (1788-1846) had studied under Luo Dian 罗典 (1718-1808) in the Yuelu Academy. See Luo Ruhuai 罗汝怀, “Shanhua Hegong zhuan” 善化何公传 (Biography of He Changling) in *Lüqi caotang wenji* 绿绮草堂文集 [Anthology of Beautiful Green Cottage], vol. 25. Cf. Zhu Hanmin, p. 229. And also *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period*, (1943-4) Vol. 1, p. 281. He Xiling later became the director of Chengnan Academy after his retirement from the post of commissioner of education of Hubei in 1828. During his term as director, both Zuo Zongtang and Luo Zenan (1808-1856) studied there, in 1831 and in 1836 respectively. See Li Xiaodan, *Xiangxue lüe*, p. 171. Zhu Hanmin, p. 235 and also *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period*, (1943-4) Vol. 1, p. 282. Yan Ruyi, one of the most influential statecraft activists of the early nineteenth century, known first through his successful suppression of the Miao rebellion in the western Hunan and then of the White Lotus, was also a student of Luo Dian in Yuelu Academy. His exemplary works on the geography and ethnology of provinces adjacent to the western frontier areas of Hunan and on Inner Asia were indebted to both his early studies in Yuelu academy and his military experiences. See *Qingshi liezhuan* [Biography of the Qing Dynasty], vol 75, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987, *ce* 19, pp. 6234-6237. And also Susan Mann Jones and Philip A. Kuhn, “Dynastic decline and roots of rebellion,” in *Cambridge History of China*, vol 10, pp. 156-7. Wei Yuan studied at Yuelu in 1813 when Yuan Minyao (*jinshi* of 1801), a student-disciple of Luo Dian, was the director. See Li Hanbin 李汉彬, “Yuelu shuyuan yu Wei Yuan” 岳麓书院与魏源 (Yuelu Academy and Wei Yuan) in *Yuelu shuyuan 1010 jinian wenji* [Collected essays for 1010th anniversary of Yuelu Academy], (Hunan: 1968), Cf. Zhu Hanmin, p. 230.

¹³⁰ Charlton M. Lewis, p. 11-2.

doctrine for the *Tongzhi* Restoration and the guiding philosophy of the Hunanese Statecraft School.

The intellectual tradition established by the Hunan school may be summarised in three aspects: honouring the study of Song Confucian moral metaphysics, emphasising the ideal of Confucian practical statesmanship and advocating practice through personal moral perfection. Although the Hunan school no longer existed, it was promoted and fostered by almost every director of Yuelu Academy from the Song onwards, sometimes with the support of the Commissioners of Education.¹³¹ This tradition exercised profound influence on shaping the nineteenth-century intellectual trend toward practical statesmanship; the best description of its nature may be seen in the educational principle of Yuelu Academy formulated by Ouyang Houjun 欧阳厚均 (*jinshi* of 1799), that is, to foster a scholarship with emphasis on both substance/principle and function/practice (有体有用之学 *youti youyong zhi xue*).¹³² Therefore, while the Hunanese activists of the nineteenth-century Statecraft School called for administrative reform, they also showed a special concern with the moral philosophy of self-cultivation and always regarded it as the root or foundation (根 *gen* or 本 *ben*).¹³³

¹³¹ Zhu Hanmin provides a brief account of the scholarship of the heads of the Yuelu Academy in the Yuan and Ming and points out that they all honoured Hu-Zhang (Shi) or Zhang-Zhu (Xi). They all did contribute to the promotion of the intellectual tradition of Hu-Zhang's Hunan school. Furthermore, in fact the scope of influence of Hunan school was not merely confined only in Yuelu or Chengnan Academy, but through their disciples and academies all around Hunan founded by disciples of their disciples, the legacy of Hunan school remained alive. See his *Huxian xuepai yu Yuelu shuyuan* (1991) pp. 202-220.

¹³² Ouyang Houjun, a student of Luo Dian, was invited after retirement to be the head of Yuelu and taught there for twenty-seven years having over three thousand students. He was a friend of Tang Jian, He Changling and He Xiling. See Li Huan 李桓, *Guochao qixian leizheng chubian*, Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe (facsimile) (1966) vol. 138, p. 35-6. Zeng Guofan, at the age of twenty-four (1835), enrolled at Yuelu under the instruction of Ouyang Houjun. In 1836, Guo Songtao and Liu Rong 刘蓉 (1816-1873) also enrolled at Yuelu and became students of Ouyang Houjun. Ouyang's idea of fostering a scholarship having substance and function manifested in his guiding principle for Yuelu Academy he made, "in order to train and bring up the people of ability (人才 *rencai*) [we] need a scholarship having both substance and function." "Yuelu keyi sanji, xu" [Preface to the third volume of prospectus of Yuelu Academy], cf. Zhu Hanmin, p. 236.

¹³³ Hao Chang argues that Wei's concern with the technical problems of statecraft such as maritime defence, taxation, the salt monopoly, and irrigation held special significant place in his thought; however, the utilitarian approach to statecraft remains a supplement to the Confucian conception of virtuous self and moral society. See his *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis* (1987) p. 16. That Wei advocated a scholarship with substance and function is also manifested in the structure of his very important philosophical work "Mo Gu" [*Hidden Corners*] which consists of two parts: *xuepian* (section of study of Confucianism) and *zhipian* (section of the Way and the arts of governance). See *Wei Yuan ji* (1983) pp. 1-81.

This tradition had persisted from the eleventh century onwards and had been enriched by generations of eminent scholars. Of course, Hunan, like other provinces, was now facing unprecedented Western intrusion. The rise of Zeng Guofan and the Xiang army's important role in the suppression of Taiping Rebellion marked the emergence of prominence of Hunan province in modern Chinese history. In the first two years of 1890s Hunan was a centre of antiforeignism and anti-evangelisation and soon after the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5) Hunan became the centre of reform movement. In both movements, Hunanese gentry-literati played the role of leading and driving force. Confucian tradition remained the major source, while Western learning became important only during the reform movement period in Hunan (1897-8). It was against this background that Yang Changji's thought started to take shape.

Chapter 2

Knowing the Way: Yang's Intellectual Roots in Confucianism

In his twenties Yang's thought began to take shape, and in his thirties, it reached intellectual maturity. This intellectual development can be roughly divided into two phases: the first is from the late 1880s to about the time of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95). Yang's intellectual and spiritual quest started with his extensive reading of classical and Neo-Confucian works in his childhood and late teens and with his painstaking self-cultivation which was motivated by the Confucian ideal of sagehood.

The second period was around the time between 1896 and 1902 before his studying abroad. In his mid-twenties, China's disastrous defeat in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95 provided yet another stimulus to his awakening political consciousness and intellectual search. The most significant event in the second phase of Yang's intellectual quest was the reform movement of 1897-98 in Hunan. He plunged himself into it, and his first serious contact with Western learning occurred during this period. Through deep exposure to Kang Youwei's idea of the Great Unity (大同), Liang Qichao's people's rights (民权) and Tan Sitong's vehemently critical attitude toward traditional Confucian ethics, Yang absorbed the elements of Western ideas to varying degrees. All these factors introduced new aspects to Yang's intellectual and moral-spiritual quest.

Learning to be a *junzi* (君子) or sage dominated Yang's early self-cultivation including knowledge, learning and mind discipline. Self-cultivation was the core of the entire Confucian enterprise and the point of departure for social commitment. According to Confucianism, theoretically, "From the Son of heaven to the commoners all should regard self-cultivation as the root."¹ While for those who inclined towards careerism, studying Confucianism was a stepping stone to official appointment for the purpose of self-interest, for Yang it was the goal and meaning of life. Underlying the Confucian ideal of sagehood was a three-fold humanistic

¹ *The Great Learning*, 1.6 in Legge, p. 359.

concern: what was the ultimate potential of a human being; how best to fulfil that potential, and what was the individual's relationship to society. Centred on these fundamental issues Yang's thought started to take shape. Although the ideas, visions, and experiences he had acquired had not yet cohered into a unified, overall system of thought, the core and inner structure of his thought and *weltanschauung* which emerged earliest among the other parts of his thought, and were to become the most stable and basic elements of his philosophy, were already formed.

To be sure, individual thought, particularly in its formative years, is influenced by the ideas and values circulating at that time. As Hao Chang points out, such an influence can come about through formal or informal channels of education.² However, this assimilation is definitely not a passive one, since an individual's perception of his or her social, cultural and intellectual environment is active and selective.

The family background

Yang Changji was born and reared in a family of teachers with a long-standing tradition of Neo-Confucian scholarship. With obvious pride Yang Changji stated that for many generations his forefathers in both paternal and maternal sides had been "scholars and teachers;" therefore, the "origins of my *junzi* (gentleman) background could be traced to the remote past."³

On consideration, my intellectual accomplishments and acquisition of certain knowledge, though rudimentary and superficial, are, indeed, due to my family education (家教) and upbringing, the intellectual legacy of my forefathers and the influence of my maternal grandmother. As a paragon of virtue she not only benefited the offspring of her own family, but also extended her influence towards my family. That is what we have to keep firmly in mind. By inquiring about the gentry's lineage of my maternal family, it can be traced back as early as to Luzhai Gong (鲁斋公).⁴ My genealogy thus clearly shows that my origins as a *junzi* go back to the remote past. In order to let the children of both families know I put down this in writing. While to express my humble respect to them is

² Hao Chang, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning (1898-1911)*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) p. 4.

³ Yang Changji, *Riji* [Diaries of Dahua Studio], (Hunan, 1981), entry of August 8, 1914, p. 74.

⁴ Luzhai 鲁斋 was the literary name (*hao*) of Xiang Zengxian 向曾贤, great-great-grandfather of Yang Changji on his mother's side. *Gong* 公 is the respectful term of address for aged men. More detailed information on this will be given in the following passages of this chapter.

my main purpose, it will also be helpful in keeping records of the family history for further inquiry as well.⁵

The origin of the Yang clan was not in Bancang (板仓), but in Putang (蒲塘) of Jinjing (金井 gold well), Changsha county. For generations and generations the Yang families had gathered around there and depended for their livelihood chiefly on farming. Most members of the Yang clan of Putang were farmers, occasionally, a very few of their children had got proper education. By the last years of the Qianlong reign 乾隆 (1736-1795), Yang Changji's great-great-grandfather had moved to Bancang. He had successfully earned a study place as "*taixue sheng*" (太学生) at the Imperial College in the capital.⁶ Thereby he had opened the way into the status of

⁵ This remark was cited in the biography of his maternal grandmother wrote by Yang on 8th August 1914. See Yang Changji, *Riji*, p. 74.

⁶ See Wang Xingguo, *Yang Changji de shengping ji sixiang* [The Life and Thought of Yang Changji] (Hunan, 1981) p. 7. (Hereafter *shengping ji sixiang*) *Sheng* (生) means student. *Taixue* (太学), the name of the highest educational institution in imperial China, was initiated by Emperor Wu of the Western Han (140-87 B.C.) in 124 B.C. By the Ming and Qing dynasties the name of *taixue* had been replaced formally by *guozhi xue* (国子学) meaning "son of state." See *Cihai* [Chinese Encyclopaedia], p.639 comp. by Shu Xincheng, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1947, p.356 and also *Jiaoyu baike cidian* [Encyclopaedia of Education] Beijing: Zhongguo nongye kexue chubanshe, 1988, p.234. However, the term *taixue* was still used widely in the Qing, for instance, even in memorials to the throne. See *Qingshi gao jiaozhu* [The Draft History of the Qing] (the collated version with annotation) vol. 113 "xuexiao" (school) (Taipei: 1986), pp. 3136-3142. *Taixue sheng* is thus a general term of address for "imperial students" in colloquial language. The students of Guozhi jian 国子监 (Imperial University and Directorate of Education) consisted usually of two categories according to their way of approval: *gongsheng* 贡生 (tribute student) and *jiansheng* 监生 (imperial university student). "Tribute Students" were those who had come top in the provincial civil examinations and had been selected and recommended by the provincial commissioner of education or instructors of local government Confucian schools (儒学 *ruxue*). They usually were the lowest degree holders or excellent in either study or moral character. "Imperial university students" were sons of the families which had rendered outstanding military service or other merits to the country and those who became imperial students through purchase. Studies on educational institutions and system in the Qing in English language are rather scarce. Chang Chung-li's *The Chinese gentry* and Ho Ping-ti's *The ladder of success in imperial China* are basically sociological studies, focusing on the Chinese gentry's roles and social functions rather than the institution of education. Cheng Qingzhi's *Zhongguo jiaoyu shi* [History of Education in China] may be seen as a remedy. Cheng provides a relatively detailed discussion on that aspect. Wang Zhonghou, a Hunanese scholar, provides another source relating to *taixue sheng*. In his "Mantan qianqing kaoshi" [About the civil service examination system in the early Qing] Wang notes that *taixue sheng* is used for those who bought the title to attend the provincial examination. The amount of money was one hundred and eight *taels* in silver. His article is included in *Zhongguo jiaoyu shi* [A history of Chinese education] by Wang Fengjie, Taiwan, Zhengzhong shuju, 1969 (1945 1st ed.). See p. 387. Wang Zhonghuo, a native of Xiangtan of Hunan, was a graduate in mining and metallurgy of the College of Industry in Hunan in the late Qing and taught in Mingde school in Hunan in 1920-21. He was also interested in history study and was the author of "Hunan shiwu xuetang" [The school of Current Affairs in Hunan] and "Changsha Mingde xuexiao yu Tianjing Nankai xuexiao" [Mingde school in Changsha and Nankai school in Tianjin]. His article was based partly upon his personal experience and observation and partly upon Long Furui's *Wuxi Zayi* 武溪杂忆 [Miscellaneous recollections in Wuxi]. Long's father was *Jinshi* degree holder. Both father and son were the founders of the famous Mingde School in Hunan. Huang Xing used to teach there. Wang's

“scholar-gentry” for his family. Since then, the family fortunes had changed, they were no longer farmers, but scholars and teachers. Yang believed that there were chiefly two factors contributing to the family transformation: moving away from the original clan and the influence of new ideas.

My family originated from the Yang clan of Putang (蒲塘, where most Yang families still live. Most of them engage in farming, very few have been educated. The most educated and reasonable were those who had moved away from the native place and lived apart from the kinsmen. That is because contact with other families with different names brings new ideas and influences into one's own family; moreover, the separation from the kinsmen enabled them to be free from the influence of the conventional thought and customs [of the clan].⁷

This remark reflects clearly that what impressed Yang most strikingly was that his ancestors had not confined themselves to the old ways of thought but had willingly exposed themselves to new ideas, a fact that may have helped to shape Yang's open attitude towards various schools of Chinese and Western thought, while he remained a firm disciple of Song Neo-Confucianism even after ten years of study abroad. His remarkable eclecticism in the scholarship may also be credited to that.

For several generations most of Yang's forefathers were low degree holders and teachers. Yang Wanying (杨万英), the grandfather of Yang Changji, was a *yixiang sheng* (邑庠生) a student of district Confucian schools, and made a living in teaching. Yang was not taught by his grandfather, as he died ten years before Yang Changji's birth, that is, in 1862.⁸ With a considerable training in Confucian classics, Yang Shuxiang, (杨书祥, *zi* 书樵) the father of Yang Changji, was also a teacher who obtained a qualification of *li gongsheng* (例贡生), although he did not use it to obtain

account may be more directly relevant, as he was a native of Hunan and knew Hunan well. His explanation of *taixue sheng* is an alternative explanation of the term.

⁷ Yang Changji, *Riji*, the entry of 31 July 1914, p. 69.

⁸ *Yixiang sheng* 邑庠生 were students of local government Confucian schools (儒学 *ruxue*) who enjoyed a government stipend. They were the holders of *xiucaì*, the lowest degree, in the hierarchical civil service examination system in imperial China. The higher degree was *ju ren*, graduates of provincial examinations and the top one were *jinshi*, graduates of metropolitan examinations. According to Qing customs, those who passed the *tongsheng shi*, the district examinations, were qualified *shengyuan* after registration to the educational officers of county. *Xiucai* was the colloquial address for them. See Tan Jiajian, *Zhongguo wenhua shi gaiyao* [Outline of the history of Chinese culture], Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 1988, Ch.7 “*keju zhidu*” [civil service examination system], p. 73-81. *Shengyuan* also indicated the social status of the holder. The holder enjoyed special exemptions and special immunities which were legally recognized and socially accepted, such as exemption from corvée and official labour service and some privileges in lawsuits etc. See Chang Chung-li *The Chinese Gentry*, pp. 38-40

any official post.⁹ This was sufficient to provide him with a proper Confucian education and to foster the profound literati-gentry atmosphere in which Yang grew up.

Yang Changji held his father in deep affection and admiration. In his view, although his father had been unfortunately “less successful in the examination arena,” he was an “honest and upright,” and “well-learned” man and a “gentle” and “kind-hearted” father.¹⁰

Information about Yang's early education remains scanty.¹¹ He was never taught by any of the noted scholars of the day. His desire for learning was first inspired by his father's private school at home. Before the age of seven, he had acquired a rudimentary knowledge of Chinese characters and Chinese poetry.¹² In 1878, at the age of seven, the family held a ceremony of recognition of teacher (破蒙拜师 *pomeng baishi*) for Yang Changji. His father was his teacher then. Yang Shuxiang was ascribed as an ardent student of Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism and also as a teacher who kept his son under very strict supervision.¹³ He launched him on a curriculum of the Confucian Classics and history. Yang's fondness for history may have started during these years. At the age of nine Yang Changji came into contact with the classical works of Song-Ming Neo-Confucians, such as Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073), Cheng Brothers, Zhu Xi (1120 -1200), Lu Xiangshan (1139-1193) and Wang

⁹ Wang Xingguo, *Shengping ji sixiang* (Hunan, 1981), p.7. *Li 例* is an abbreviation of the term *juanli* (捐例) meaning purchase. As to *gongsheng* see footnote 6 of this chapter. They were eligible for direct official appointment. The rank of post varied according to their study record in theory.

¹⁰ Yang Changji, *Riji*, p.74.

¹¹ There are several biographies of Yang in Chinese, but they all are very brief and terse. Li Xiaodan, one of Yang's close friend and author of *Xiangxue lue*, contributed two short but informative pieces of work about Yang's life. Cao Dianjiu, director of Education Department of Hunan province in 1926 and one of Yang's old acquaintances, wrote “Yang Changji xiansheng zhuan” (Biography of Mr Yang Changji) in 1958, although it was not published until 1983. Zhang Shizhao (1881-1973), one of Yang's close friends who studied with him at Aberdeen University, wrote “Yang Huaizhong biezhuang” in 1963. They are now included in *Yang Changji wenji* (Collected works of Yang Changji) (Hunan, 1983) compiled by Wang Xingguo. Wang Xingguo's “Yang Changji nainpu” (The chronological biography of Yang Changji) and his book *Yang Changji de shengping yu sixiang* [The life and thought of Yang Changji] seem the most valuable and reliable, for they drew upon the *Putang Yang shi zu pu* (The genealogy of Yang clan in Putang), an unpublished family record.

¹² Yang Shuxiang later opened a private school at home. The loud and rhythmic voices of pupils reading Chinese classical poems and Confucian texts attracted Yang Changji a great deal. He liked to follow them in their reading. That pleased the father, of course, who started to teach Yang Changji to read poems and words in his spare time. See Wang Xingguo, *Yang Chaji de shengping ji sixiang*, p.12-13.

¹³ Wang Xingguo, *Yang Changji de shengping ji sixiang*, p. 13

Yangming (1472-1529).¹⁴ Of course, at that time Yang could only recite details of these works without really understanding the real meanings. However, reading works of these Neo-Confucian philosophers may have kindled Yang's first desire to be a *junzi* or sage (圣人 *shengren*).

Undoubtedly, his father's outlook and practice had a significant influence on Yang Changji's own distinct view of, and approach to, Confucian humanism. It is thus not surprising that at the age of twenty, Yang Changji set his life goal to be a teacher, and, from then on, he dedicated himself to education: nothing diverted him from this aim.¹⁵ Completing the matriculation form of Aberdeen University in 1909, Yang claimed "teacher" as his father's occupation. That is a clear indication of his own evaluation. In Yang, "teacher" was not only an ideal job, but also the highest life ideal. He linked "teacher" tightly with the Confucian ideal of the *junzi*. In Yang's later view, the image of Confucius was of "a great teacher," rather than "a great statesman." According to Confucian teaching the ideal of humanity, the self-realisation of a *junzi*, could not be achieved without commitment to political engagement by the way of public service. Confucius himself did offer a concrete model to fulfil his political vocation. However, there was something like fate that lay beyond human control. In fact, in the end Confucius turned to the subject of education. Yang proclaimed:

Since ancient times all the great educators have engaged themselves first in political activities. Because they could not put their abilities to good use, they all turned to education in the end. Confucius travelled around the world and intended to save the people through political engagement, but unfortunately circumstances always did not allow this. Being old he withdrew from political engagement and started to devote himself to the transmission of the Way through compiling and transmitting (刪述 *shanshu*). He established a lecture hall in Xingtan (杏坛), like water gradually moistening new leaves, his thought nourished the generations and finally became a faith accepted by the entire nation (国教 lit. national religion). The other examples were Cheng [brothers], Zhu [Xi], Lu [Jiuyuan] and Wang [Yangming]. Although they were well known in their life-time, their teachings (道) did not spread widely at that time, their doctrine exerted a widespread influence only on later generations. They failed in the sphere of politics, but succeeded in education; the

¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 195, 14.

¹⁵ Yang Changji, "Yu guiguo huo duiyu jiaoyu zhi cuogan (My impression and view on Chinese education after returning to China), *Wenji* (Changsha, 1983). p. 52. The article was published originally in *Hunan Jiaoyu Zazhi* [Educational Journal of Hunan], no. 17, (1913) and no. 3, 4 (1914).

greatness of their thought was not recognised for a while, but these thoughts have been continued over one hundred generations. ... The validity of political institutions is restricted to certain times and situations, while education and transformation go beyond such limits.¹⁶

“Taking an official appointment” (入仕 *rushi*) was an inseparable part of the Confucian ideal of the *junzi* starting from self-cultivation and finishing with participation in “ordering the state” and “harmonising the world.” Yang’s setting his will in education implied a refusal of political engagement and a reform of the content of the Confucian idea of social commitment. The idea of achieving the *junzi* ideal through education rather than by “taking officialdom” exerted a decisive influence on Yang’s whole life and intellectual orientation.

During this period Zeng Guofan’s works were first included in the curriculum by Yang’s father who had a high regard of Zeng’s scholarship, philosophy of life and instructions for running a home. He instructed his sons and pupil in the reading of Zeng’s works and even ordered them to learn Zeng’s family instructions (家训 *jiaxun*) by heart and practise them.¹⁷ When Yang Changji taught at the provincial First Normal School, Changsha, Zeng Guofan’s works remained on the curriculum for his students.

As Yang Changji himself conceded, he owed much to his father; Yang Shuxiang was the person who initiated him into Neo-Confucian philosophy, and gave him the first glimpses of Chinese history. He also introduced Zeng Guofan into his son’s life, Zeng became one of the people Yang adored deeply throughout his lifetime, and above of all, inspired his desire to be a sage and worthy and sowing the seed of living as a *junzi* (superior man). All of these factors influenced the shaping of Yang’s personal and philosophical traits.

At the age of fourteen (1884), Yang’s father passed away. Yang was sent away to study with a private tutor for a while.¹⁸ From then on self-study was the main way of his pursuit of Confucianism. During the course of shaping the sense of *junzi* (君子) in Yang’s childhood and youth, the influence of his maternal family cannot be

¹⁶ Yang Changji, “Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi” [Education and politics], in Hunan jiaoyu zazhi [Journal of Hunanese education], no. 16 (1913). See *Wenji*, p. 43.

¹⁷ Wang Xingguo, *Shengping ji sixiang* (Hunan, 1981), p. 14.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 14, 195.

underestimated. Yang's mother came from the Xiang (向) family of Pingjiang (平江), a neighbouring county of Changsha. It had been a scholar-gentry family for many generations. Xiang Zengxian, Yang's great-great-grandfather, a holder of the *jinshi* (进士) had been Instructor, Third Class (学录 *xuelu*) at Imperial College.¹⁹ It was said that his scholarship adhered wholeheartedly to the teachings of the Five Masters of Song philosophers: Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi. Moreover, Xiang was a devout practitioner of self-cultivation, recording his daily words and conduct in a diary and checking them against the doctrine and example of Confucian sages and worthies.²⁰ It is worth noting that Yang Changji kept a diary in the same style. That may suggest that apart from Zeng Guofan, the family heritage might have the most direct influence on Yang. After his death Xiang Zengxian was accorded, along with all celebrated local scholars, a place in the Temple of *Xiangxian* (乡贤 local worthies).²¹ In Yang's view he was a "celebrated scholar in Song Neo-Confucianism, especially in the 'Odes' and the 'Rites', and was a genuine Confucian through living in a frugal and diligent manner."²² This remark reflects Xiang's influence on shaping Yang's inclination toward Song Neo-Confucianism.

During his childhood and youth Yang's maternal grandmother was a person who was not only a teller of family glories, a common role played by Chinese women, but also a moral exemplar who influenced Yang's view on the power of moral character. The two families had a particularly close and affectionate relationship, because Yang's paternal grandmother was her blood sister. Therefore, Yang Changji received special care from his maternal grandmother, particularly after the deaths of his parents at the

¹⁹ See *Hunan tongzhi* [Gazetteer of Hunan province], comp. by Zeng Guoxuan *et al*, 1885. Reprinted by Taibei Huawen shuju, 1976. Vol 191, p.21-22n. The translation of this official title is cited in Charles O. Hucker's. *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*. California: Stanford University Press, 1985, p. 232.

²⁰ *Hunan Tongzhi* [A general history of Hunan], vol. 191 "guoshao renwu - Pingjiang" [who was who in the Qing times in Pingjiang County], *ce* 8, ed. by Zeng Guoquan, *et al*, in 1886, reprint, Taibei: Huawen shuju, 1976, p. 3939.

²¹ *Xiangxian* was the honours title bestowed by the Qing government through the recommending of district officials on distinguished scholars for virtuous deeds and scholarship. The temples called *xiangxian ci* (乡贤祠), "Temple of worthies," were built in every district and prefecture, ceremonies were usually held by local people and young Confucian students twice a year in spring and autumn for worshipping and memorising these celebrated gentry-scholars after their death. See *Zhongwen da cidian*, 中文大词典 [The Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Chinese Language] ed. by Chang Chi-yun, Taiwan: Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu chubanshu, 1968, vol. 33, p.383.

²² Yang Changji, *Riji*, p. 73

ages of nine and fourteen respectively.²³ She arranged Yang Changji's marriage. In 1888 when he was eighteen and, and in fact, didn't feel ready for such a step.²⁴ Yang showed special concern with the problem and old custom of marriage and his later translation of Westermarck's (1862-1939) work on "Marriage" may be connected to his personal experience. As Yang's obituary of his maternal grandmother reflected, her preservation of her chastity after the death of her husband at twenty-four, her strong will, industry and thriftiness, and her successful management of household, impressed Yang the most.

Student of the Confucian school of Changsha County

In 1889, nineteen year old Yang passed the first hurdle on the marathon journey of the civil-service examinations.²⁵ A success which provided him with a great encouragement. Moreover, during the examinations Yang attracted the attention of Zhang Hengjia 张亨嘉 (18? -1910), the educational commissioner of Hunan.²⁶ Zhang

²³ Yang Changji, *Riji*, the entry of 8th August 1914, pp. 72-4.

²⁴ Wang Xingguo, *Shengping ji sixiang*, p. 15.

²⁵ In the Qing dynasty this first examination was called *tongzishi* (童子试), which usually took place twice every three years, consisted of three levels: the first level examination (*xianshi* 县试) held by county magistrate and officers of education which included five parts. Those who passed were sent to take part in the second level examination (*fushi* 府试) held by prefectural officers of education including four parts; the examiner of third level examination (*daoshi* 道试) was the educational commissioner of province. The examination usually took two days and the contents of examination included a eight-legged essay, and several discussion essays on policy making, historical events, administrative affair, or frontier defence, etc. See Wang Zhonghou, "Mantan qianQing kaoshi" [About the Civil-service Examination System in the past Qing], in Wang Fengjie's *Zhongguo jiaoyu shi* [A History of Chinese Education], (Taiwan, 1969) (1943 1st ed.) pp. 382-87 and Cheng Qingzhi, *Zhongguo jiaoyu shi* [History of Education in China], Shanghai, 1936, re-printed by Taipei: Commercial press, 1963, pp. 468-70.

²⁶ Zhang Hengjia (zi Xiejun 燮钧, canonized as Wenhou 文厚) was a native of Houguan, Fujian province. Houguan was the home town of well-known Lin Zexu 1785-1850) and Yan Fu (1853-1909). One year before the Hundred Days Reform 1898, he got a place in Southern Study (*nan shufang*), a personal studio of the Emperor and became one of the Guangxu Emperor's most valued officials. During the Boxer Uprising (1900-1), Zhang was sent to investigate the Boxer movement. He was one of the few who spoke frankly at the confidential meetings against trusting Dong Fuxiang and using the Boxers to fight against foreign powers, though he was aware clearly that empress dowager Cixi was strongly in favour of using the Boxers in this way. However, Zhang survived and during the Xinzheng (New Policy, 1901-1911), was a strong supporter of educational reform. As the educational Commissioner of Zhejiang in 1901, he carried out a provincial reform project, major tasks of which were converting traditional academies and private educational institutions into a hierarchical modern school system, adopting Western elements into the curriculum, such as Western mathematics, geography, languages and gym etc., and revising examination content by introducing essays on Western politics and scholarship. In 1904, he was appointed the inspector-general of education (大学总监督 *daxue zongjiandu*, 1904-06) in charge of the Imperial University (京师大学堂 *jingshi daxuetang*) in 1904. Zhang paid particular attention to setting up the subjects of law and politics in the curricula of *jinshi guan* (进士馆 General Education Division, later developed to a independent college named *jingshi zhengfa xuetang*, (京师政法学堂 Beijing College of Law and Administration) which

discovered Yang's excellence and, on his recommendation Yang enrolled into the Confucian School of Changsha County as *yixiang sheng* (邑庠生).²⁷ The title suggests strongly a very close relationship between Zhang and Yang at that time.²⁸ The patron-student was customary in the Qing dynasty: those who distinguished themselves in the examinations could win the favour of provincial examiner; the honour was the personal meeting. Thereby the students were recognised as his own "student" (门生). They could develop further close academic and personal ties with their "mentor" and "patron" (恩师) in the future.²⁹ This student-patron custom was also institutionalised through a series of ceremonies.³⁰ As a *yixiang sheng*, it is very possible that Yang came under Zhang's influence at this time.

Following his arrival at Changsha Zhang started by fostering the practical side of Hunan's intellectual tradition through his educational innovation. He focused on the Xiangshui Jiaojing Tang (湘水校经堂), founded by Wu Rongguang 吴荣光 (1773-1843) during his period as governor of Hunan (1836-?) according to the model of

inaugurated the study of Western law in China. For general biographical information see "Zhang Hengjia" in *Qingshi gao jiaozhu* [清史稿校注 Draft History of Qing Dynasty], Vol 448, *liezhuan* [列传 Biography] no. 228, *ce* 13 (Taipei, 1989), p. 10460. For the collusion of the ministers with Empress Dowager Cixi during the Boxer uprising see also Li Chien-nung's *The political history of China 1840-1928*, trans. and ed. by Teng, Ssu-yu and Jeremy Ingalls, London & N.Y.: D. van Nostrand company, inc., 1956, p.157. For the reform efforts made by the Qing government during the Xingzheng era see Douglas Reynolds' *China, 1898-1912: The Xingzheng Revolution and Japan* (1993), and also Marianne Bastid's *Educational Reform in Early Twentieth-Century China*, trans. by Paul Bailey (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1988). For Zhang Baixi and Imperial University see "Zhang Baixi" [Biography of Zhang Baixi] in *Qingshi liezhuan* [Collected biographies of the Qing Period], Vol 61, (Beijing: zhonghua shuju, 1987) p.4816-4824.

²⁷ See footnote 8 of this chapter.

²⁸ According to Wang Zhonghou, students who won the favour of the teacher were generally called *jiaoxiang* (the address derives from the names of schools in Zhou times). Accordingly, those who were sent to a County school would be called *yixiang sheng*, and those to Prefecture School were called *junxiang sheng*. See Wang Zhonghou's "Mantan qianQing kaoshi" (About the Civil-service Examination System in the late-Qing)", in Wang Fengjie's *Zhongguo jiaoyu shi* [A History of Chinese Education] Taiwan: 1969, pp. 385-6.

²⁹ There is no single study specifically on the patron-students relationship in the Qing. Susan Mann Jones and Philip A. Kuhn provide a brief account on patron-student relationships in Qing scholarly and official communities, pointing out that the patron-student net which prevailed in the Mid-Qing was one of the major sources of corruption which caused the eventual decline of the Qing. See their "Dynastic decline and the roots of rebellion" in *Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 10, pp. 114-116.

³⁰ According to Wang Zhonghou, there were two ceremonies for those who passed the *xiuca* examinations: *yesheng* (谒圣), worship of Confucius) and *yeshi* (谒师), pay respect to directors of county or prefecture school and provincial examiner). "Mantan qianQing kaoshi" [About the Civil-service Examination System in the late-Qing]", in Wang Fengjie's *Zhongguo jiaoyu shi* [A History of Chinese Education] Taiwan: 1969, pp. 385-6.

Xuehai Tang 学海堂 in Canton.³¹ The intention was to reorient the overemphasis of study on the eight-legged essay (八股文) in Hunan's schools and academies towards an interest in the study of the doctrine of the Confucian classics. Wu recommended three subjects: *jingyi* 经义 (study of Confucian classics), *zhishi* 治事 (practical study of managing public affairs) and *cizhang* 词章 (literature).³² Wu's proposal seems to have ensured the success of Han learning in Hunan, for the Jiaojing Academy became the centre of Han learning there.³³ Zhang Hengjia's plan was to re-build the Jiaojing Academy as an independent institution in a new site. Funds were soon raised from local salt merchants. After the completion of the Academy in 1891, Zhang launched the new curriculum for Jiaojing Academy, based on *jingyi* and *zhishi*. The aim was to "train men of ability based on scholarship with emphasis on both *ti* (体 substance/principle) and *yong* (用 function/practicality) in order to provide the state with capable officials."³⁴

This curriculum is reminiscent of the time-honoured distinction drawn in the Neo-Confucian curriculum since Hu Yuan 胡瑗 (993-1059) in the early Song.³⁵ It

³¹ Wu was a graduate of the Xuehai Tang in Canton and a disciple of Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849), a capable, skilled and influential high-ranking official and a leading scholar of Han Learning in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. He founded two academies: the Gujing jingshe in Hangzhou (1801) and the Xuehai Tang in Canton (1820), which became renowned centres of Han learning and New Text school. During 1820s and 1830s, there was an acute awareness of the need for reform among officials in both the capital and the provinces. Ruan Yuan's proposal which differed from Tao Shu and He Changlin (both of whom were Hunanese, see chapter one), aimed at the revitalisation of morality and the transformation of the intellectual climate through encouraging the study of Classics. The teaching in the Xuehai Tang was dedicated to this aim. Courses were oriented toward mastery of the classics through exegetic and philological research on Han commentaries. Stress was placed on the so-called 'solid learning,' that is, to "grasp the subtleties and the great moral meaning of the classical works and to apply these principles to contemporary pressing problems". That became an established tradition within the Xuehai Tang and the so-called school of Guangdong learning (粤学 *Yuexue*). Furthermore, under the influence of Ruan Yuan, an eclectic approach to integrated Han learning and Song learning in Confucian scholarship was developed gradually, centring around Xuehai Tang, which characterised the Guangdong learning. Zhu Ciqi (朱茨奇 1807-1881), Kang Youwei's teacher, was a typical example of someone who was in favour of lifting the distinction between Han Learning and Song learning. See *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 10, pp. 158-60, 144-5. Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao* (1971), pp.18-20.

³² Li Xiaodan, pp. 222-3.

³³ Several preeminent Hunanese scholars of Han learning were graduates of, or associated with, the Jiaojing Academy, including Cheng Rongjing, Du Guichi, Xiong Xiling, Cheng Kexiang etc. See Zhu Hanmin, p.212 and Li Xiaodan, pp. 222-3.

³⁴ *Hunan jinbainian dashi jishu* [A chronological narrative of major events in Hunan during the last hundred years], (Changsha, 1959), p. 113.

³⁵ Hu Yuan, known as Mr Anding, a Taizhou (Zhejiang province) scholar and educator, was recognised as one of the three great pioneers of the rise of the Neo-Confucian movement in the early Song. He held several official posts and eventually was promoted to Professor of Imperial Sacrifices (太常博士 *Taichang boshi*). But he devoted himself to teaching in Suzhou and Huzhou for more than

signified an emphasis on practical statesmanship.³⁶ The motivation behind the curriculum Zhang recommended may be best seen as stressing directly the main points of a moral-political approach rather than simply calling for return to antiquity, when we compare it with the widely accepted syllabi in the late Qing.³⁷ Zhang Hengjia's revision of the curriculum in the Jiaojing Academy made it a banner in Hunan for the promotion of practical statesmanship alongside the Yuelu Academy (岳麓书院) and Chengnan Academy (城南书院 South of the Wall). Furthermore, it paved the way to bring the centre of the storm of reform movement in Hunan to the Jiaojing Academy.

The significance for Yang Changji being a student of the Confucian School of Changsha county was by no means simply a matter of personal fame or profit for his future career in officialdom, it was far more important that it enabled Yang to come into contact with a broader intellectual world. It opened the way for him to study at several leading Changsha academies. Between 1892 and the autumn of 1893 Yang studied at *Chengnan* Academy to prepare for the provincial examination of 1893.³⁸ He also studied at the *Qiuzhong* Academy (求忠书院 Seeking loyalty);³⁹ both these academies were included in the three most prestigious institutions in Changsha.⁴⁰ It is also very likely that Yang also studied for a while at the *Jiaojing* Academy (校经书院) in Changsha before 1896.⁴¹ These studies at the leading Academies enabled him, a

twenty years. He established a curriculum consisting of two parts: *jingyi* and *zhishi* 治事. He imposed strict discipline upon his students and set an exemplary model himself. He advocated a scholarship marked by *mingti dayong* 明体大用 or "illumination of the essence (Confucian principles) for the purpose of application [in government]." In the Qingli period (1041-49), when the Imperial University was established in capital, his teaching methods were introduced into the Imperial University by formal decree. See *Songyuan xue'an*, *Songshi*, *Song Biographies* edited by Herbert Franke (1976) pp. 444-5.

³⁶ Yu Yingshi, "Qingdai xueshu sixiangshi zhongyao guannian tongshi" in his *Zhongguo sixiang chuantong de xiandai quanshi* [A modern interpretation of the intellectual tradition of China], (1995) p. 419.

³⁷ For instance, the syllabus set up by Kang Youwei in Changxing xueshe in 1891 comprised four categories: *yili* (moral philosophy), *jingshi* (practical statesmanship), *kaozheng* (textual criticism) and *cizhang* (poetical literature). Kang Youwei, "Changxing xueji" in *Kang Youwei quanji* [The complete works of Kang Youwei], vol. 1, Shanghai, 1987, pp. 555-6. Kang's educational program was an emulation of that of Zeng Guofan, Chen Li and Zhu Ciqi. See Hao Chang, *Chinese intellectuals in crisis*, (1987) p. 37.

³⁸ "Yang Changji nianpu" [Chronological biography of Yang Changji], in Wang Xingguo, *Shengping ji sixiang* (Hunan: 1981), p. 196.

³⁹ Yang Changji, *Riji*, entry of 15th day of ninth month 1896, p. 10.

⁴⁰ Charlton M. Lewis, *Prologue*, (Harvard, 1976), p.10.

⁴¹ For Yang's study at *Jiaojing*, please see Li Xiaodan's *Xiangxue lue* [An outline of history of Hunan scholarship] (Changsha, 1985) p. 223. In the chapter relating to the scholarship and history of

son of a village teacher, to familiarise himself with himself a variety of thought of schools of metropolitan scholarship, and undoubtedly benefited in broadening Yang's intellectual horizon.

Around this time Yang started his teaching career as a private teacher in the urban area of Changsha in order to make a living. His study and life may be reflected in a poem written in 1892.

Making friends through exchanging ideas and literary works,
All were elegant and prestigious scholars
How joyful to meet and drink wine with them
And indeed, now how lonely I feel I am
Like a solitary wild crane with lofty ideals
Sitting with my legs apart under the tall pine tree
There is a wandering traveller
Who, missing his home, Bancang, is tossing and turning restlessly.⁴²

In Chinese literature, the image of a “crane” under the “pine tree,” usually used symbolises a person of moral virtues and high ambition standing aloof from the material and vulgar world. Drawing an analogy between himself and a “crane” under a “pine tree” reveals clearly Yang's earnestness for learning to be a superior man (君子 in contrast to the common people). In addition, the poem also reflects clearly the restless mentality of a young man just entering society and his spiritual thirst for an intellectual mooring before he settled on a faith.

It was at this point, soon after Yang Changji moved to Changsha in the autumn of that year, Yang Yulin (杨毓麟 1871-1911) entered his intellectual life. Yang Yulin (1871-1911), *zi* Dusheng (笃生), known after 1904 as Yang Shouren (杨守仁), was the same age and from the same Yang clan; though he was not from Bancang, but from Changsha.⁴³ They immediately became very close friends and their intimate relationship remained throughout the lives, although later there was a wide

Jiaojing Academy, Li notes that Yang compared the teaching methods of the *Jiaojing* Academy with the University of London. It seems that Yang was very familiar with *Jiaojing*, even if he had not studied there. Moreover, Zhang Hengjia, Yang's patron, was the one of the founders of *Jiaojing* Academy.

⁴² This poem was recopied by Yang in his diary of 1896. See *Riji*, p. 2.

⁴³ Although the two men were the same age, according to generation, Yang Changji was the generation of grandfather while Yang Yulin was that of a grandson. See Yang Yulin's poem of a trip from Ballater to Braema in Scotland in *Jiayin Zazhi* [The Tiger], 1:4 (November 1914). In the note Yulin called Yang Changji *shuzu* (叔祖 younger brother of grandfather).

divergence between the two men over political views and scholarly interests.⁴⁴ To be sure, amongst Yang Changji's coterie, Yulin was the person with whom Changji felt most close and congenial in terms of disposition and both shared a deep concern with the fate of China. Yulin's intellectual talent and erudition may be one of the main reasons for attracting Changji. Three poems written by Yang Changji in 1892 and 1893 respectively narrated vividly his affinity for Yulin and this intimate friendship.⁴⁵

Like Liang Qichao, Yang Yulin was a child prodigy. "At the age of seven, he could write a thousand word essays." "By the age of twelve or thirteen, he had read intensively the thirteen Confucian Classics, *Shiji* [史记 Records of the grand Historian of China], [*Zhaoming*] *Wenxuan* 昭明文选 [The literary works of Court Academician], the majority of the literary works of the most important and famous Chinese poets and literati. At the age fifteen he became *boshi diziyuan* (博士弟子员 Erudite government student)." During the period before 1897 he studied in three of the leading academies of Hunan: Yuelu, Chengnan and Jiaojing. He was exposed to a variety of traditional Chinese schools of thought ranging from Chinese Buddhism to classical noncanonical philosophies (诸子学 *zhuzixue*) including Laozi and Zhuangzi.⁴⁶ He was an avid student of Chinese history, and stressed the ideal of practicality in the Confucian tradition. Yang Changji had a great contempt for the "empty talk" of metaphysical concepts such as "mind-and-heart" and "nature", which was in vogue among late Ming Neo-Confucian scholars and was in favour of learning for the purpose of application. Both Yulin and Changji shared the same view of the necessity of change to China. There may have been a mutual influence. But within the aspect of practicality, their understanding was different. While Yang Yulin focused on statecraft and institutional and political reform, Yang Changji preferred the so-called "intellectualistic-moral approach", that is, emphasis on correcting people's mind-and-heart and reforming bad social customs through education and on the moral exemplary of a Confucian elite for solving the social-

⁴⁴ This difference will be unfolded in the following chapters.

⁴⁵ Yang Changji re-copied these poems in his diary of 1896. See *Riji*, p. 2-3.

⁴⁶ My biographical account of Yang Yulin is based on Yang Changji, "Daohai Lieshi Yangjun Shouren Shilue" (A brief biography of martyr Yang Shouren), *Jiaying zazhi* [The Tiger], Vol. 1:4, Nov. 10, 1914, p. 2 and Cao Yabo, *Wuchan geming zhengshi* [A real History of the Revolution of 1911], (Shanghai: 1989), pp.368-375.

political problems of China. The shaping of this view should be seen as a development of his study and painstaking practice of the age-old Confucian ideal of inner sagehood and outer kingship in his early years.

Confucian ideals of sage-king, junzi and humanity

Yang's commitment to Confucianism in general, and to Song Neo-Confucianism in particular, stemmed not only from his childhood training, the examples of senior members available in his family tradition, and breathing the air of Confucian culture around his environment, but also from his many years spent poring over classical and Neo-Confucian texts and painstaking self-cultivation. His serious intellectual and moral-spiritual quest dated back to 1891 when he reached his twenties, as is evident clearly in his diary which began in that year.⁴⁷ The diaries from 1891-1896, though fragmented and incomplete, record the process of his painstaking and assiduous self-cultivation, the line of development of his thinking, and his approach to Confucian learning. Although preparing for the civil service examination remained the part of his curriculum of Confucian learning, the concern with self-cultivation formed an increasingly prominent part of his thought, which marked the point of departure of his intellectual and moral-spiritual request.

The motivating force behind his Confucian learning was absolutely not careerism (taking office), neither was it merely a purely academic interest, rather it was the embracing of Confucianism as a living faith. It means that one dedicates oneself to a set of ultimate values and to practice them. Learning was only the significant sign of instrumental function; the ultimate value of learning was to use it as a guiding philosophy for one's thought and action, and one's moral life.

That such commitment amounted virtually to a religious belief is demonstrated clearly in the fact that Yang considered his intellectual and spiritual quest as nothing but knowing the Way "How could one enter the Way, if he didn't try to free himself from the common lot of man (俗缘)!" were the first lines of his diary of 1891.⁴⁸ And

⁴⁷ Yang's earliest extant diary started in 1891. A copy of his diaries from 1891 to 1895 was survived in collections of Li Jinxi (1890-1978). It is first published in Wang Xingguo ed. *Yang Changji wenji* [Anthology of Yang Changji] (Hunan: 1983). For a detailed bibliographical note see Appendix.

⁴⁸ "Riji, 1891," in *Wenji*, p. 2.



elsewhere, “It is what is called living in vain when he has not known the Way.”⁴⁹ Aiming at knowing the Way was important, as it foreshadowed the orientation of his intellectual development and characteristics of his thought.⁵⁰ By the “Way” Yang definitely did not mean the naturalistic definition of kind, such as the path, but the Confucian Way or “learning to be a sage (圣人之道 *shengrenzhiue*).” “One has to acquire the knowledge of sagehood, before he can discuss matters concerning the fate of one’s country and compassion for one’s people,” Yang stated.⁵¹ To identify “knowing the Way” with the “learning of the sages” shows explicitly that Yang embraced Confucianism as a living faith rather than a philosophical system.⁵² And Yang’s self-cultivation now was fuelled by the Confucian ideal of sagehood.

In the tradition of Neo-Confucianism the pursuit of the “learning sagehood” means nothing but the attainment of the highest Confucian ideal of *ren* (humanity). The sagehood was the embodiment of the ideal of *ren*. The realization of *ren* requires a dual commitment that is crystallised in the formulation of “sagehood within and kingship without,” or “sage-statesmanship.”⁵³ Although the meaning of “inner

⁴⁹ “Riji,” (1903) in *Wenji*, p. 26.

⁵⁰ For a very brief account of understanding of Confucianism as a living faith see Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao* (Harvard, 1971), pp. 7, 9-19 and de Bary, *The message of the mind in Neo-Confucianism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1989. p.2.

⁵¹ See “Riji, 1892,” *Wenji*, p. 6

⁵² For the translation of the two terms see de Bary, *The message of the mind in Neo-Confucianism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989. p. 1.

⁵³ The two English translations actually reflect the development of the concept of *neisheng waiwang*. “Learning of the Sages” refers to the ancient Chinese ideal of “sage-kings,” regarded as models for the rulers, which also implies symbols of an idealized social order or political institutions, for instance, of the Zhou dynasty. The concept of “sage-kings” was used not only by Confucians but also by Moists and by Taoists. That reflects a collective effort of Chinese thinkers and philosophers of classical times in seeking an ideal culture. For the idealization of ancient emperors and kings, see Wei Zhengtong’s “Chuantong Zhongguo lixiang renge de fenxi – chonggu jiazhi quxiang de yanjiu” [An analysis of the conception of ideal personality in Chinese tradition: an inquiry into the value orientation of honouring antiquities] in his *Rujia yu xiandai Zhongguo* [Confucianism and Modern China] (Shanghai, 1990), pp. 2-14. It is interesting to note that the expression of *neisheng waiwang* (“sagehood within and kingship without”) is first found in “Tianxia” chapter of *Zhuang Zi*, rather than in any early Confucian literature. See Feng Youlan, *A short history of Chinese philosophy*, trans. By E. R. Hughes, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd) 1947. p. 5. And also Donald J. Munro, *The Concept of Man in early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 114-5. However, it became the centre of the Confucian rather than other schools. Down to the Northern Song period, the emphasis of “*neisheng waiwang*” shifted to the personal cultivation of the educated elite who saw the realization of moral society or social renewal relying on the force of education through their moral examples and teaching of “learning of the Sages” and on their leadership in the society, often at a local level rather than at court. See de Bary, *The message of the mind in Neo-Confucianism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989. p. 1-2. In the late Qing, “*Waiwang*” was mainly represented in the idea of “*jingshi*” or “statesmanship.” Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, (Harvard 1971), pp. 7-9.

sagehood and outer kingship” has undergone considerable development in the long span of the evolution of Confucianism, its basic meaning has remained more or less fixed. Accordingly, it involved into a dual commitment: self-regarding commitment to self-cultivation and other-regarding commitment to practical statesmanship. Self-cultivation led to personal self-realization (the attainment of the highest virtues of *ren* (仁) and *cheng* (诚) and the “practical statesmanship” referred to the ordering and harmonising of the world. It should be note that this dual commitment was conceived as a correlative and indivisible whole. A man could not be called a sage no matter how morally cultivated he was, unless he fulfilled his commitment to public service. Conversely, the realization of the harmonization of society and the settings in order of the world depended on the men who had achieved moral perfection.⁵⁴

However, this ideal was not an impossible task, because realization dwelled in the everydayness. Mencius declared, “The sage and I are the same in kind.”⁵⁵ “The Way is not remote from man.” And “The Way may not be left for an instant. If it could be left, it would not be the Way.”⁵⁶ That may be seen as one place in which the charisma of Confucianism lies. Confucianism as one of the most comprehensive, sophisticated and complex systems of the thought in the world, provided a workable scheme that was a congenial approach. From the case of Yang Changji we will see that Confucianism remained a dominant intellectual source for Chinese intellectuals of the 1890s generation.

“Learning to be a sage” or the achievement of *ren* was underlain by three fundamental humanistic questions: what was the ultimate potential as a human being? (Or simply, who I am?) What was the relationship to society? And finally, how to realise this ultimate potential? This threefold concern was the core of the entire Confucian enterprise and the unique Confucian view of man, the self and human nature was its foundation. Accordingly, “man” was placed in a pivotal position in the universe. Man is not only a creature of dynamic process of the “Great Ultimate,” but in turn participates in this process. As a creative being man achieved

⁵⁴ Benjamin Schwartz, “Some Polarities in Confucian Thought,” *Confucianism in action* (California: Stanford University Press, 1959), p 52. And also Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, (Harvard, 1971), pp. 8-9.

⁵⁵ *Mencius*, 6A.7. Chan Win-tsit, *A Source book*, (Princeton, 1969), p. 55.

⁵⁶ *Doctrine of the Mean*, ch. 1, para. 2, see Legge, p. 384.

humanity through “forming one body with Heaven and Earth and the myriad things” instead of the conquest of it. In this sense, the Confucian concept of man distinguished itself from Western anthropocentrism. The sage was one who “established himself as the ultimate standard for man.” Hence, he could not transcend the structure of man; instead he was designed as its very embodiment.⁵⁷ Thus, the sage is in essence the exemplar of the most authentic, genuine, and sincere man.⁵⁸ At this point, self-cultivation and “learning to be a sage” can be understood as a process of seeking the “full manifestation of the most authentic, genuine, and sincere humanity inherent in oneself.”⁵⁹ It is a holistic way of learning to be human through knowing the self, realising the ultimate autonomy of the self, and manifesting the humanity inherent in the self. This “from within-toward-without procedure is not a straight line of kind, but something like a circle. In the centre of the circle stands nothing but the self. Through self-cultivation, the self obtains the force of morality, which issues out from the centre in all directions in order to influence others. The nearer the self completes authentic self-realization, the mightier is his morality. Thus self-cultivation required two commitments: moral, mental and behavioural self-restriction and a spiritual self-transcendence, in Neo-Confucian terms an “enlargement of the mind.” Fully convinced by these Confucian terms, it was against this background that Yang Changji launched his painstaking self-cultivation.

Cultivation of the mind and altering the physical nature: theory and methodology

One concern that dominated his thinking after “setting his heart on the Way” at this time, was the “cultivation of an undisturbed mind-and-heart” (修不动心 *xiubudongxin*). It is very indicative in the fact that in his early diary there are nineteen references to mind-and-heart, and only three or four to *ren*. That may be explained as the influence of Confucius, for it is said that Confucius himself speaks rarely of *ren*, although *ren* is at the centre of his thought.

⁵⁷ Zhou Dunyi, “Taiji tushuo” [An explanation of the diagram of the Great Ultimate] in *Zhouzi quanshu* [The complete works of Zhou Dunyi]. For English translation see Chan, Wing-tsit, *A source book* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 463-4.

⁵⁸ Tu, Wei-ming, “The Neo-Confucian concept of man,” *Humanity and self-cultivation*: (Berkeley, 1979), p.72.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Yang's consideration of the all-important theme of mind-and-heart derived from a natural development. During the process of self-cultivation the first problem to perplex Yang was that of mind-and-heart. In the diary of 1891 he wrote, "There was always no peace in my mind-and-heart so that it was not its own master. How could I read a book?" Again in 1892, "improper thoughts (妄念 *wangnian*) were caused by reflections on hearing, seeing and feeling. They aroused suddenly one thought leading to another, and the subject of these thoughts also were shifted quickly. In a moment a dozen ideas came across. The mind-and-heart was so active and moved so quickly!"⁶⁰ As for the solution, Yang turned to Mencius, "The end of inquiry and learning is nothing more than seeking the lost mind."⁶¹

Ardently taking "seeking the lost mind" as the starting point marked Yang's approach to self-cultivation. At the same time, it is clear that Yang embraced the Mencian moral-idealistic doctrine about mind and nature. It has been long recognized that since Mencius the problems of mind-and-heart and of human nature have become prominent. Among the philosophers and thinkers of his time, Mencius was the first to propound the problem of mind-and-heart, although he did not provide the most detailed account of it.⁶² In the later Neo-Confucian development, Zhou Dunyi, the first pre-eminent philosopher in the Northern Song, inherited the tradition established by Mencius; this movement of thought was further developed by Zhang Zai and reached its culmination in Cheng Hao. In the Southern Song, Hu Hong and the Hunan School were the main protagonists of this line of tradition, and it referred also to Liu Zongzhou 刘宗周 (1578-1645) of the Ming dynasty.⁶³ The holistic

⁶⁰ "Riji, 1891, 1892," in *Wenji* p. 2, 5 For "seeking the lost mind" see *Mencius*, 6A.11

⁶¹ "Riji, 1891" in *Wenji*, p. 2. The translation is adapted from de Bary's *The message of the Mind in Neo-Confucianism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 193.

⁶² Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti* [The substance of the mind and the substance of human nature] (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1968-69) Bk. 1, p. 281. See also Zhang Dainian, *Zhongguo zhixue dagang* [An outline of Chinese philosophy], Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1982, pp. 233, 235. According to Zhang, the problem of mind-and-heart did not found in *Laozi*, *Mozi* and even in the thought of Confucius. Mencius was the first to pay close attention on it, yet the more detailed account concerning mind-and-heart is found in book of *Xunzi*.

⁶³ Based on his year long philosophical research of Neo-Confucianism as a whole, Mou Zongsan challenged the conventional demarcation of the Cheng-Zhu school on the one hand and the Lu-Wang school on the other. In his view, the "authentic line" of Neo-Confucian philosophy consisted of two complementary streams. The first was what we mentioned above and the second was represented mainly by Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming. The "actual line" referred to Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi. One of the most striking points resulting from such demarcations made by Mou was that Zhu Xi's system of thought departed in many aspects from the Mencian tradition, especially in the view on mind-and-heart that led to Zhu develop his own formulation of self-cultivation that was apparently

understanding of the ontological structure of mind as being in terms of substance of the mind and as an existential process in terms of spontaneity and moral creativity of mind characterised their view of mind-and-heart. In accord with this view was their formula concerning moral practice, that is, a doctrine of and approach to self-cultivation. This is presented nowhere clearer than in the first paragraph of chapter “exertion of mind to its utmost” (尽心).

He who exerts his mind to the utmost knows his nature. He who knows his nature knows Heaven. To preserve one's mind and to nourish one's nature is the way to serve Heaven. Not to allow any double-mindedness regardless of longevity or brevity of life, but to cultivate one's person and wait for [destiny to take its own course], is the way to fulfil one's destiny (立命 *liming*).⁶⁴

This “mind” was nothing but what Mencius called “four germinations,” namely a moral sense. This moral mind was endowed by Heaven and rooted in one's nature. It was neither reducible nor absent. It was the most fundamental sources for us being moral, but could be easily “lost.”⁶⁵ To an extent, the entire Confucian self-cultivation can be explained as “seeking for the lost mind.” Only sages and worthies were able to “preserve” it. However, the moral sense in the mind was always to be regained if one would.

Humanity is man's mind and righteousness is man's path. Pity the man who abandons the path and does not follow it, and who has lost his mind and does not know how to recover it. When people's dogs and fowls are lost, they go to look for them, and yet, when they have lost their minds, they do not go to look for them. The way of learning is none other than finding the lost mind.⁶⁶

The driving force of finding, cultivating and developing this lost original moral in the mind derived from nowhere else than the human mind itself. Because of the rational capacity of the mind, or in Mencius's term *si* (thinking or reflection), Mencius never doubted the possibility of regaining the original moral mind (本心 *benxin*) and human perfectibility.

distinct from the Mencian tradition. Only the movement of thought represented in the minds from Zhou Dunyi to Liu Zongzhou continued the authentic spirit of Mencius. Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti* [The substance of the mind-and-heart and the substance of the nature] Vol. 1, pp. 42-59. See also Tu Wei-ming's review article “Mind and Human Nature” in *Journal of Asian Studies*, 30 (May 1971):642-7, and Liu Shu-hsian's review article in *Philosophy East and West*, 20. 4 (1970) 419-422.

⁶⁴ *Mencius*, 7A.1. see Chan Wing-tsit's *A Source Book*, p. 78.

⁶⁵ My interpretation of Mencius's theory of the self-cultivation is based on Tu Wei-ming, “On the Mencian perception of moral self-development” in his *Humanity and Self-cultivation*, pp. 57-68.

⁶⁶ *Mencius*, 6A.11, in Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 58.

When our senses of sight and hearing are used without thought and are thereby obscured by material things, the material things act on the material senses and lead them astray. That is all. The function of the mind is to think. If we think, we will get them. If we do not think, we will not get them. This is what Heaven has given to us.⁶⁷

It should be noted that in Mencius, the moral and evaluating implications of the notion of thought or reflection, rather than epistemological implication, were of primary importance. In this point Mencius stressed thought or reflection, the function of mind, as a unique characteristic of human being distinct from other beings. In his theory of self-cultivation, thinking was also in the key position of the establishment of *dati* 大体 (the noble part of the nature). Thinking was the necessary precondition of the grasping of the moral mind (or the human nature) (知性 *zhixing*) finally leading to fathom out Heaven. Shed in this light we will understand why for Yang Changji and Confucians of his kind cultivation of the mind was of primary importance.

The thrust of this theory was “preservation of one’s mind and nourishing one’s nature.” Mencius’ doctrine of the nature and his approach to “nourishing one’s nature” were significantly developed by the Song Neo-Confucians. Zhang Zhai’s doctrine of physical nature (气质之性 *qizhi zhi xing*) for the first time provided a metaphysical foundation for a convincing answer to the question of the origin of the evil.⁶⁸ Through Cheng Yi, Zhang’s theory of physical nature and its relevant methodology of the self-cultivation were completed in Zhu Xi. After then, the “transformation of the physical nature” (变化气质 *bianhua qizhi*) occupied a central position in Confucianism. In Ming and Qing times, various theories and approaches to the self-cultivation emerged. The “character-building programme” launched by Hunanese scholar-officials Tang Jian in the 1820s, which was continued by his disciples Wo Ren and Zeng Guofan, was one distinct example.⁶⁹ Zeng Guofan was a hero of Yang. Thus it is no wonder that “transformation of the physical nature” became another of Yang’s main concerns over the many years of the self-cultivation.

⁶⁷ Mencius, 6A.15, in Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 59.

⁶⁸ See Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, “Comment,” p 511. According to Chan, this point is credited to Zhu Xi.

⁶⁹ For Tan Jian and his doctrine of the self-cultivation see Chiu Wei-chun, “Morality as Politics,” (Ph. D thesis, The Ohio State University, 1992). See also chapter 1 of the present study.

Mind-cultivation Having given some background, we can now turn to Yang's theory and practice of self-cultivation, in which, three concepts, *xu* 虛 "void" (or emptiness), *jing* 靜 "tranquillity" (or quiescence) and *zhuyi* 主一 "mastering oneself in oneness" (or mind-oneness) were of primary importance.

The void was a state in which the mind was "pure and clear" (澄然 *chengran*). Furthermore, *xu* denoted a state of transcendence over vulgarity (脱俗 *tuosu*) in which the human mind could be identified with Heaven and "creator" (造物主 *zaowuzhu*). Yang wrote in his diary,

Closing my eyes. In my imagination, I stand at the top of Taihua mountain, and my sight can reach what is ten thousand miles away. [I feel that I reached] a level ten times nobler than this world (尘世 *chenshi*), and all vulgar ideas have disappeared, there are only emptiness and clearness (空明 *kongming*) in my mind, harmonising with the *qi* of the Great Void. That is the real joy of floating the mind (游心 *youxin*).⁷⁰

"The Great Void" is one of the most important categories in Zhang Zai's philosophy. "The Great Void has no physical form. It is the original substance of vital force (*qi*)."⁷¹ "The Great Void is clear (清 *qing*). Being clear, it cannot be obstructed. Not being obstructed, it is therefore spirit."⁷² "From the Great Void, there is the name of Heaven."⁷³ Zhang Zhai attributed all characters of the Great Void and Heaven, such as clear, without form and full of *qi*, to the mind.⁷⁴ Shed in this light we will understand why Yang asserted that he would cultivate the mind until it was "as void as Heaven."⁷⁵

Yang cherished a noble ideal of transcendence of vulgarity and convention in order to unite with Heaven. This is Yang's consistent point, for instance in the diary of 1893, Yang wrote,

⁷⁰ Yang Changji, *Riji*, entry of the fourth day of the ninth month 1896, p. 5. See also *Wenji*, p. 12

⁷¹ Zhang Zai, *Zhengmeng*, see Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 501. For understanding Zhang Zai's concept of the Great Void and *qi* see Chen Junmin, "Zhang Zai zhaxue luoji fanchou tixi lun" (On Zhang Zai's philosophy: the system of its logic and categories), *Zhongguo zhaxue fanchou ji* [Essays on Chinese philosophical categories], Beijing: Renmin, 1985, pp. 312-8, and also Zhang Dainian, *Zhongguo zhaxue dagang*, (Beijing: 1982), pp. 43-50.

⁷² Zhang Zai, *Zhengmeng*, see Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 504.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ For understanding Zhang Zai's concept of mind and its relation with the *qi* and the Great Void see Tang Chün-i, "Chang Tsai's theory of mind and its metaphysical basis" in *Philosophy East and West*, 6.2(July 1956:113-136.

⁷⁵ Yang Changji, "Riji, 1893" in *Wenji*, p. 7.

The universe (宇宙 *yuzhou*) is a stage (戏场 *xichang*), and the past and the present are a dreamland (幻境 *huanjing*). The fair of the Town Temple God was busy and flourishing, but in only a couple of days it became quiet. As transient as a fleeting cloud, all of this soon disappeared. All desires of the common people are like that. Only those who takes the broad view (达观者 *daguanzhe*) can live in a simple way dwelling in a busy world, ... having a vast and passionate *qi* (浩然之气 *haoran zhi qi*) and a pure and clear mind (澄然之心 *chengran zhi xin*). Furthermore, having transcended any worries of the commoners he makes contact with the creator (与造物主同游 *yu zaoyuzhu tongyou*). How could he indulge his mind in luxury and extravagance of this world?⁷⁶

This passage has a strong breath of Daoist outlook, and it is true that in his youth Yang was exposed to Zhuangzi's thought. For instance, in his diary of 1891 Yang wrote, "How could one enter the Way, if he didn't try to free himself from the common lot of man (俗缘)! After reading these words in *Zhangzi*, I understood fully the whole implication of that sentence."⁷⁷ Furthermore, a Mencian influence is also evident. The term *haoran zhi qi* derives from *Mencius*. "As a vital force, it is exceedingly great and exceedingly strong. If nourished by uprightness and not injured, it will fill up all between heaven and earth. As a vital force, it is accompanied by righteousness and the Way."⁷⁸ Thus we can see, Yang accepted Mencius's notion of the vast and flood-like vital force and was convinced that he who has this kind of vital force could reach the mystery and ideal state of unit with Heaven. This idea was crucial for Yang's undertaking earnest practice of quiet-sitting and exercise of vital energy as the way to cultivate the mind.

Tranquillity was another theme in Yang's notion of self-cultivation.

Dismiss the distracting thoughts and observe principles of Heaven and Earth in quietness (静观天地之理 *jingguan tiandi zhi li*), and then the spirit (神 *shen*) will be free from the short-sightedness and narrowness. Sit in quietness and reflect deeply, examine regularly whether everything falls into its proper place, and then *qi* will not be disturbed by trifling affairs. Conceal your heart-and-mind within and make sure it does not drift away from the place in which it should be.⁷⁹

From the above paragraph we can see that Yang's notion of quietness denoted a prerequisite for receptivity, for gaining a deep insight, for penetrating meditation and

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

⁷⁸ *Mencius*, 2A.2. in Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 63.

for the self-examination. It was a state in which the mind was in its proper place and *qi* was well balanced, and, as a result, the spirit had obtained its freedom in the highest degree. The quietness was used by Yang in opposition to a state in which distracting and random thoughts dominated the mind. Quietness hence did not mean an absolutely inactive state of mind, but rather an active, orderly and harmonious thinking. Therefore, Yang held a dialectic view of the relationship between activity and tranquillity, a view recalling Zhou Dunyi's concept. Accordingly, "Being active without activity and tranquil without tranquillity" was the unique quality of the spirit.⁸⁰ And the spirit was also attributed by Zhou to a state of the sage. "Sincerity is infinitely pure and hence evident. The spirit is responsive and hence works wonders. Incipient activation (几 *ji*) is subtle and hence abstruse. The sage is the one who is in the state of sincerity, spirit, and subtle incipient activation."⁸¹ Given this background, it is clear that Yang also regarded quietness as a fundamental capacity for achievement of sagehood. Another prominent concept which is associated closely with the void and quietness was *zhuyi*, 主一 or "having mastery of oneself in oneness."

As we mentioned above, at the outset of self-cultivation, Yang was perplexed with worries of distraction caused by random and improper thoughts (妄念 *wangnian*). From his diaries we can see Yang often spoke of ideas of "abiding in reverence (居敬 *jujing*) and mastery of oneself in oneness." "Reverence" and "mastery of oneself in oneness" were prominent ideas in the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian tradition. The idea of "oneness" could be traced back to Zhou Dunyi. In Zhou's moral philosophy, "oneness" meant "concentration on one thing" and having no desires. According to Zhou's logic, "Having no desire, one is vacuous (虚 *xu*, being absolutely pure and peaceful) while tranquil, and straightforward while in action. Being vacuous while tranquil, one becomes intelligent (明 *ming*) and hence penetrating (通 *tong*). Being straightforward while active, one becomes impartial (公 *gong*) and hence all-embracing (博 *bo*). Being intelligent, penetrating, impartial, and all-embracing, one is

⁷⁹ Yang Changji, "Riji, 1895, in *Wenji*, p. 12.

⁸⁰ Zhou Dunyi, *Penetrating the Book of Changes*, ch. 16 "Activity and Tranquillity," see Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, pp. 471-2.

⁸¹ Ibid, ch. 4, "sagehood," p. 467.

almost a sage.”⁸² Cheng Yi refused Zhou's idea of “no desire” because of the strong breath of Daoism, instead he advocated “reverence” or “seriousness.”⁸³ Following Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, Yang emphasised “reverence” in terms of “abidance by rite” (守礼 *shouli*) and the “dismissing of distracting, random and improper thoughts” (廓清妄念 *kuoqing wangnian*) to achieve mastery of oneself in oneness. Yang held,

The starting point of learning to be sage is reverence; if one sticks to reverence, one will find joy in it.⁸⁴

At the beginning of setting goals for learning [of sagehood], one should conform to rites.⁸⁵

In order to control wild fancies and distracting thoughts Yang turned to Confucius's motto,

An ignorant and presumptuous student talks wildly. Wild talk results in absurd ideas, absurd ideas result in taking rash action. Alas! All of this is caused by [reading] a book. ... And then I come to understand why we should not slacken the efforts in every minute in practise of “looking not at what is contrary to rites; listening not to what is contrary to rites; speak not what is contrary to rites; and make no movement which is contrary to rites’.”⁸⁶

This Confucian saying derives from Confucius' conversation with his student about “subduing one's self and returning to rites” and the ideal of humanity. In this context the implication of Yang's passage above can be seen clearly. With further regard to the reason for the absurd and improper thoughts and disturbed mind, Yang set forth,

There are various kinds of improper thoughts (妄念) in the mind-and-heart. However, they can be generalised in two points: *waichi* (外驰 going outward and chasing after the external things) and *guoqu weilai* (过去未来 past and future). By *waichi* is meant that [the mind] is not in its proper [spatial] status; that is said horizontally, while “past and future” denotes that [the mind] is not in the present (proper point of time); that is talked of vertically. ... The mind arrives where the sight falls, and the mind also follows the sound heard by ears. By recollecting the scenes of past, people and events leaped up so vividly in the view as if [one] revisited the past, the mind-and-heart is in the past now. As to foreseeing the future, the people, events and scenes of the future would be imagined as if they were real and the mind was in the future. There is what is unnecessary to be seen and to be listened (杂视杂听 *zashi zating*)

⁸² Zhou Dunyi, *Penetrating the “Book of Changes,”* ch. 20, see Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 473.

⁸³ See Chan Wing-tsit's “comment,” *ibid*, pp.473-4.

⁸⁴ Yang Changji, “Riji, 1892” in *Wenji*, p. 4.

⁸⁵ Yang Changji, “Riji, 1892” in *Wenji*, p. 3.

⁸⁶ Yang Changji, “Riji, 1892” in *Wenji*, p. 6. For the Confucian saying see *Analects*, 12.1, in Legge, p. 250.

which leads to the mind being disturbed; There is in the past and future what is unnecessary to recollect and foresee (杂忆杂测 *zayi zace*) which causes the mind to go outward and chase. ...When mind-and-heart is not in its proper location (出乎其位 *chuhuqiwei*), what should be considered will be largely reduced. When the mind is wandering in past and future, things which should be considered here and now will be forgotten. Therefore, we have to pay attention to our mind-and-heart. Only when we get the wandering thoughts in the past and the future into the frame of the mind for the present, and act to concentrate on one thing while getting rid of what you have heard and seen which are contrary to the rites, hold the personal knowledge coming from seeing and hearing (闻见之知 *wenjian zhi zhi*) and hide it, and then can one preserve the mind.⁸⁷

Several points can be discerned from the above paragraph. First of all, Yang divided knowledge into two categories: perceptual and rational. What was perceived by ears and eyes belonged to the former, which was random and disordered was called by Neo-Confucians including Yang, “knowledge coming from seeing and hearing.” In the Neo-Confucian tradition, this kind of knowledge was distinct from the “knowledge obtained from inner moral sense” (德性之知 *dexing zhi zhi*).⁸⁸ So the most important thing was not to allow these random and numerous thoughts to distract the mind, but to return it to its commanding and autonomous position. Furthermore, in this period, Yang's emphasis on comprehending the present can be discerned.

Floating mind and Quiet-sitting Yang advocated quiet-sitting, a popular form of meditation from the Song dynasty down to Qing times. What was unusual was Yang's practice of the so-called “floating mind (游心 *youxin*)” which was a kind of exercise of breathing combined with inward envisioning. This was not simply a matter of method, but part of his intellectual and spiritual quest.

There are so many wandering thoughts that it is difficult to control them. ... what I can do is only to sweep them away regularly. ... During the cleaning up, we allow the mind/heart to float around the body and four limbs and enjoy the feeling of the circulation of blood throughout the body; then followed by floating the mind/heart around the Great Void, while imagining the wonder of the clear and void *qi* (清虚一气之妙 *qingxu yi qi zhi miao*); and then see the mind as itself (以心观心 *yixin guanxin*) while imagining how the mind is collected in one point, not distracting

⁸⁷ Yang Changji, “Riji, 1894” in *Wenji*, p. 10.

⁸⁸ Zhang Zai was the first among the Song Neo-Confucians to use the term “knowledge coming from seeing and hearing” see Zhang Dainian, *Zhongguo zhexue dagang*, p. 503.

and dominating the world (主宰万物 *zhuzai wangwu*), while Heaven and Earth, and the myriad things turn towards it. This wonderfulness is indescribable. This practice has been lost for ages. I must spare no effort in it.⁸⁹

The floating mind was performed by Yang very often during this period. After returning to China, Yang even taught this method to his students in Changsha. "At the beginning breathe in and out for several time, and then let the mind/heart go along with this breathing in and out, finally free the mind/heart to float about the body and four limbs ... The essential is to ensure that the mind/heart is in its proper place. To check whether the master is at home can prove that the mind-and-heart is really back in the body."⁹⁰ Yang's "floating the mind" should be seen as a seeking for intellectual and spiritual freedom from the convention. The foregoing shows clearly that in Yang, the idea of mastery of one's self in oneness was involved in a practice of vital energy and the realization of Confucian ideal was guaranteed by the applicable method. In this way, Confucian ideals pervaded throughout the mental and everyday life of a Confucian student.

Altering the physical nature Like his Hunanese forerunners, such as Tang Jian and Zeng Guofan, Yang paid particular attention to "altering the physical nature." He held that there were two different kind of *qi*:

There is an inexorable doom where the hidden disaster lurks. In the proceedings of the way of Heaven (天运), it manifests itself in the growth of *yin* and the dispersal of *yang*, while in the human mind it is expressed by the human desires surpassing the Principle. If one wants to remove the hidden disaster of the universe, he must eliminate the perverse *qi* of his own mind (己心之戾气 *jixin zhi liqi*), and then the *qi* of the myriad things will become orderly and smooth.⁹¹

When the perverse *qi* of one's own mind begins to germinate, eliminate and clear up, this is the foundation (本 *ben*) of *shu* (恕) or 'principle of reciprocity.' When the cosmic perverse *qi* (宇宙之戾气 *yuzhou zhi liqi*) begins to contact us, eliminate and clear up it, this is the application (用 *yong*) of the 'principle of reciprocity.'⁹²

As the above quotations shown, although perverse *qi* was one, it took two different forms: one within and one without. For Yang perverse *qi* within was seen as the root

⁸⁹ Yang Changji, *Riji*, entry of the 7th day of the ninth month, 1896, p. 7.

⁹⁰ Yang Changji, *Riji*, entry of 13 October 1914, p.96.

⁹¹ Yang Changji, "Riji, 1894," in *Wenji*, p. 9.

⁹² Ibid, p. 10.

source of evil and hence played a more decisive role than perverse *qi* without. This view was in accordance with his idealistic outlook and also with the Confucian tradition of emphasis on inwardness. As for the contents, Yang's project of "altering the physical nature" included mainly overcoming self-conceit and rashness (矜平躁釋 *jinping zaoshi*) and restraining wrath (懲忿 *chengfen*).⁹³ The first two were the most common tasks of self-cultivation, and the last originated from Zhou Dunyi and were advocated particularly by Tang Jian and Zeng Guofan.⁹⁴

During the process of cultivation of the mind and altering the physical nature, Yang's view of the mind was formed. This view became the core of his humanistic outlook and provided the foundation for his notion of valuing the self.

Yang's concept of the mind and man

Metaphysically, Yang perceived the mind-and-heart as a powerful and wondrous entity that was able to transcend all spatial and temporal boundaries. This assumption resulted from his discussion of the reason for "random and improper thoughts." Yang wrote, "By recollecting the scenes of the past people and events leapt up vividly into view as if [one] were revisiting the past, one's mind were in the past. As for foreseeing the future, the people, events and scenes would be conjured up as if they were real: hence the mind is in the future."⁹⁵ These personal inward observations convinced Yang that the mind had no temporal and spatial limits and allowed him to develop a transcendent outlook on the mind-heart and its relationship with the universe. He formed a view of an all-encompassing and pervasive mind. This was a key step for him in his move towards an overwhelming reliance on the mind in both moral cultivation and intellectual pursuit.

Yang also formed the view that mind/heart was the master of the universe. Yang stated, "a man of humanity (仁人者 *renrenzhe*) regards the mind/heart as the ruler of Heaven and Earth, the body as the location (廬舍 *lushe*) where the mind/heart

⁹³ Yang wrote in his dairy of 1893, "overcoming self-conceitedness and rashness is essential for altering the physical nature." See *Wenji*, p. 8. For the "lessening anger," see his dairies, 1892-94, in *Wenji*, pp. 3,5,7,8.

⁹⁴ See Zhou Dunyi, *Penetrating the Book of Changes*, chapter 31 in Chan, Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 477. For Tang Jian and Zeng Guofan's "character-building" programme, see Chiu Wei-ch'un, "Morality as Politics," (PhD thesis) The Ohio State University, 1992, esp. chapter 2 and 4.

⁹⁵ Yang Changji, "Riji, 1894," in *Wenji*, p. 10. A full-length quotation has been shown above.

dwells.”⁹⁶ How could the mind/heart assume such a supreme position? That was because Yang held that man's mind/heart was identical to the mind/heart of Heaven and Earth. He asserted firmly, “the mind/heart of man was nothing but the mind of Heaven and Earth.”⁹⁷ The mind/heart of Heaven and Earth was man's mind/heart; man's mind/heart was the commander of man; therefore, man's mind/heart was the ruler of Heaven and Earth. The “mind/heart of Heaven and Earth” was a commonly used term by Neo-Confucians. Accordingly, Heaven and Earth were assumed to represent impartiality and justice, and selflessness. The Cheng brothers maintained that “essential speaking, the way of humanity may be expressed in one word, namely, impartiality. ... When one makes impartiality the substance of his person, that is humanity.”⁹⁸

For the Chengs, by being “impartial” one could eliminate the distinction between one's self and others, for the idea of oneness with all things was considered by the Chengs to be basic quality of *ren*. Zhu Xi set forth that by “making impartiality the substance of one's person” it meant “after one has completely overcome his selfishness, he can see humanity in his own person.”⁹⁹ Furthermore, all Neo-Confucians, including Cheng Hao, Hu Hong, Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi and Lu Xiangshan, acknowledged the life-giving quality of the mind of Heaven and Earth to be humanity, although in terms of the relationship between the concepts of humanity and the human mind there were certain different emphasises and variance.

Yang's usage of the notion of the “mind/heart of Heaven and Earth” might contain all of these implications. However, the “mind/heart of Heaven and Earth” denoted the Confucian ideal of humanity, the root source of good. More important for our discussion of Yang, was that through identifying the mind/heart of man with that of Heaven and Earth, a subjective mind/heart was given an objective foundation. Furthermore, the mind/heart became a link for communication between man and

⁹⁶ Yang Changji “Dahuazai riji” (1903), *Wenji*, p. 27.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Zhu Xi (ed) *Jinsi lu jizhu* [Collected commentaries on *Reflections on things at hand*], 2:52, (Sibu beiyao) (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju) Vol. 2, 12b-13a. Translated in Chan Wing-tsit's *Reflections on Things at Hand*, (New York & London: 1967) p. 62.

⁹⁹ Zhu Xi, *Zhuji yulei* 95:39a. Cited in Chan's *Reflections on Things at Hand*, (New York & London: 1967) p. 62.

Heaven. Yang's view manifested a strong inclination towards a subjective idealist worldview like that of Lu Xiangshan.

The identification of the mind/heart of man with that of Heaven and Earth also enabled Yang to form a kind of anthropocentric view of the relationship between man and universe. Zhang Zai's thought was the main source of inspiration. Yang wrote,

'All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions.' Heaven is my [heavenly] canopy, and Earth is my mat. Pondering on it quietly, [then you would understand] that there is just one breath (一息 *yixi*), through which the source of existence of the past and of the present interpenetrates and fuses (古今之机通也 *gujin zhi jitong ye*); Heaven and Earth are complete in an individual (一人 *yiren*). Then, we can see how vast is the mind's volume.¹⁰⁰

To be sure, this passage was Yang's echo of Zhang Zai's well-known short treatise "Western Inscription," in which Zhang called for extending an universal brotherhood until nothing was outside of one's self. However, the point Yang drew from Zhang Zai was of man's self-centred view of universe. Man was the centre of the universe, the mind/heart was the centre of the man, therefore, the mind/heart was the lord of the universe. Zhang Zhai's philosophy provided another support for Yang to argue that the mind/heart was the master of the world.

Zhang Zai's influence can also be seen in Yang's notion of one *qi*. Elsewhere Yang reiterated the same theme, "All that fills the Heaven and Earth is nothing but one *qi* (一气 *yiqi*)," he went on,

All that interpenetrates (通) the past and the present was nothing but one *qi*. It was the *qi* that breathed out of my mouth and was breathed in the nose of others. It was also the same *qi* that dispersed from the body of the ancients and [condenses to] give me a physical form. There was indeed only one *qi*.¹⁰¹

Qi was one of the most important categories of Zhang's cosmology and ontology. He held that Heaven and Earth, and man shared one source of origination, that is, the "*qi* of the Great Void." This *qi* also filled the human body. Therefore, the reality of man was identical with the reality of Heaven and Earth. That which commanded the

¹⁰⁰ Yang Changji, "Riji, 1894," in *Wenji*, p. 10-11.

¹⁰¹ Yang Changji, "Dahuazhai riji"(1903), *Wenji*, p. 27, This passage was used by Yang in his "Lunyu leichao" see *Wenji*, p. 73.

universe was the nature of the *qi* of the Great Void that was inherent in one's nature by birth. In this light, Zhang declared, "that which directs the universe I consider to be my nature."¹⁰² The foregoing shows clearly the influence of Zhang's theory of *qi* on Yang's concept of the mind/heart.

The final aspect of Yang's notion of the mind/heart was reflection. As shown above, believing the uniqueness of human beings to lie in the capacity for rationality originated in Mencius, for whom thinking was regarded as the most important function of the mind/heart. Through thinking, Mencius believed, the lost mind could be regained definitely. For Zhou Dunyi, "thinking" was the path to be a sage.¹⁰³ Yang was well aware of the significance of "thinking," as the most important function of the mind/heart," in reaching the high level of penetrating things. He declared,

In my life I have benefited from two things: one is strenuous practice (力行 *lixing*), the other is profound reflection (深思 *shensi*). Strenuous practice involves matters of the corporeal realm (体魄界 *tipojie*), while profound reflection refers to the mental-spiritual realm (灵魂界 *linghunjie*). [We] cannot emphasise the effort of study (or learning) (学 *xue*) at the expense of the effort of reflection (思 *si*), nevertheless, reflection is particularly important. Reflection is the effort that leads to sagehood. The sage penetrates all (无不通 *wubutong*). Penetrating all stems from the ability to penetrate subtlety (通微 *tongwei*), and penetrating subtlety stems from reflection.¹⁰⁴

It is unmistakable that Yang held a structure of a triad of knowledge through the distinctions between practice, learning and thinking. The clear-cut distinction between learning and thinking can be traced back as early as Confucius.¹⁰⁵ As Black points out, the balance was in favour of learning as the practice of Confucius himself bore out.¹⁰⁶ The study or acquisition of knowledge was specified as having five interrelated parts in the *Doctrine of the Mean*, that is, broad learning (博学 *boxue*), critical inquiry (审问 *shenwen*), careful reflection (慎思 *shensi*), "clear discrimination" (明辨 *mingbian*) and "earnest practice" (笃行 *duxiang*). Both Cheng

¹⁰² Feng Youlan, "Zhang Zai de zhaxue sixiang jiqi zai dao xue zhong de diwei" 张载的哲学思想及其在道学中的地位 (Zhang Zai's philosophy and its position in Neo-Confucianism), *Zhongguo zhaxue* 中国哲学 (January 1981), 5: 81-2.

¹⁰³ For Zhou Dunyi's discussion of learning to be a sage and "thinking" see chapter 1.

¹⁰⁴ Yang Changji, "Dahua zhai riji" (1903), *Wenji*, pp. 24-5.

¹⁰⁵ See *Analects*, 2.15, 15.31, and 19.6.

¹⁰⁶ A. H. Black, *Man and Nature in the philosophical thought of Wang Fu-chih*, p. 217.

Yi and Zhu Xi emphasised that no single one of these five things could be dispensed with.¹⁰⁷

Wang Fuzhi sorted out the first two into the category of learning and the second two into the category of reflection. As for the practice he valued it extremely highly in terms of regarding it as the end rather than the means. For him the practical intentions provided motivation for every stage of thought and learning from which knowledge was obtained.¹⁰⁸ Clearly, Yang's formula of a triad of knowledge derives from Wang Fuzhi.

We can sense that Yang was at pains to try to strike a balance between "learning" and "reflection." However, he eventually placed the greatest value on "profound reflection," which was important, because its objects were "what is hidden and subtle."

In Confucianism, "subtlety" (微 *wei*) was used to characterise the mind of the Way (道心 *daoxin*),¹⁰⁹ which Zhu Xi associated with the "Principle of Heaven." Furthermore, he suggested a psychic meaning to the mind of Way in terms of designing an equilibrium and still state of mind that reflected man's original goodness. However, in him, the mind of Way mainly denoted such fundamental moral principles as humanity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, sincerity and so on. Furthermore, "subtlety" was also applied to denote the "substance of the Way," associated with another term of the "hidden" (隐 *yin*). Zhu Xi specified the "substance of the Way" as the reason why things are as they were (所以然之理 *soyiran zhi li*) and stated, "the reason for things being as they are is because they are hidden and cannot be seen." "It could not be seen or heard, that was why it was called "hidden." And one had to "think of" it (致思 *zhisi*).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四书章句集注 [The commentaries on Four Books], Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983, p. 57.

¹⁰⁸ Wang Fuzhi, Du 'Sishudaquan' shuo 读四书大全说 [On reading the *Great Completion of the Four Books*], vol. 4, ch.2. sec. 8, (Beijing, 1975), p. 217. A. H. Black, pp. 213 and 217.

¹⁰⁹ This refers to the well-known Confucian formula regarding to the mind in sixteen Chinese characters, "The human mind is precarious, but the mind of Way (or rendered as the "moral mind" according to the meaning) is subtle." See *Book of Documents*, chapter 3 "Dayu mo" (大禹谟 Counsels of the Great Yu). For translation see James Legge, p. 61.

¹¹⁰ In the commentary of the first sentence of chapter twelve, the *Doctrine of the Mean*, "The Way of the superior man functions everywhere (费 *fei*) and yet is hidden (隐 *yin*)."¹¹⁰ Zhu Xi annotated that "fei"(immanent) meant the wide and broad function [of the Way], while "hidden" denotes the subtlety

Wang Fuzhi's explanation of the terms *xian* (显) and *yin* (隐) may provide further help in understanding Yang's term of *xian*. In Wang Fuzhi "that which is *xingershang* (形而上, above the form or metaphysical) is hidden; that which is *xingerxia* (形而下, within the form or physical) is manifest (显 *xian*)."¹¹¹ While "hidden" is used to design what belonged to "prior to physical form" (but it is real and existing), the "manifest" is applied to indicate what belonged to the world of "posterior to physical form." In this light, Yang's term "manifest," as an opposite to "subtle," was used to denote the "phenomena of things and affairs," while "subtle" (微) was used when he spoke of such "hidden and subtle principles" (隐微之理 *yinwei zhi li*) concerned with the "reason why it is so," which is metaphysical in its scope.

Epistemologically, the former relates to "experiential knowledge," a kind of knowledge obtained from hearing and seeing (闻见之知 *wenjian zhi zhi*) or to what Wang Fuzhi called "ordinary intelligence" (知觉运动 *zhijue yundong*);¹¹² the latter to the "rational intelligence" that is what Yang called "*si*" 思, (reflection). Regarding the Neo-Confucian structure of knowledge, Yang held that the "phenomena of things and affairs" were the objects of *gewu* 格物 (investigation) while the hidden and subtle principles and metaphysical concepts fell into the category of *zhizhi* (致知 extension of knowledge). He claimed that "I have ears and eyes, I can investigate things; I have mind and reflection, I can study principles exhaustively."¹¹³

Yang never denied that what was obtained from hearing and seeing (闻见之知 *wenjian zhizhi*) was one of the sources of the knowledge. He held that the faculties of hearing and seeing were endowed by Heaven and Earth and the knowledge obtained from the perception by senses depended on external stimuli and objects. He stated

of the substance (体之微 *ti zhi wei*). For Zhu Xi's commentary see "Zhongyong zhangju," in SSZJ, p. 22-3. For the translation of *Zhongyong*, see Chan, Win-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 100.

¹¹¹ Wang Fuzhi, DSSDQS, volume 2 "Commentary on the *Doctrine of the Mean*", ch. 11, p. 100. Stanislaus Lokuang pointed out that Wang Fuzhi was unique in using "hidden" and "manifest" to interpret *xingershang* (prior physical form) and *xingerxia* (posterior physical form). See his "Chu Hsi's theory of metaphysical structure" in *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism*, p. 60.

¹¹² Wang Fuzhi, DSSDQS, 10/699-700. "Ordinary intelligence" (知觉运动 *zhijue yundong*) was frequently used by Wang Fuzhi to denote the mind's basic powers of perception and "movement," as Wang maintained that the intellectual aspect involved a process of acquiring the empirical knowledge. In this regard he was seen as breaking with tradition.

¹¹³ Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu fanlun" 教育泛论 (On education in broad sense), *Youxue yibian* 9 (Aug. 1903) p. 867.

that “the faculty of hearing was due to the fact that the vibrations of sound of Heaven and Earth fall on the ears; and the faculty of seeing derived from the illumination of the sun and the moon.”¹¹⁴ Associating man's faculties of hearing and seeing with the “sounds of Heaven and Earth” and the “illumination of the sun and the moon” implies not only that Yang valued the faculties of the sense organs, but also that he believed in the existence of a objective world. That enabled him to eschew the subjective idealism of Lu-Wang school which denies the existence of objective reality.

As for the relationship between “sensory faculties” (耳目之官 *ermuzhiguan*) and “mental faculty” (心之官 *xinzhiguan*), although Yang never spoke of the important Mencian concept that, “the senses were blocked by whatever objects they contacted” (蔽于物 *biyuwu*), he followed the Mencian line of condemnation of the senses. He introduced his own term *waichi* 外驰 (the mind chases after external things), most probably an adaptation of Zhuangzi's *zuochi* 坐驰 (chasing while sitting down).¹¹⁵ He recognised that hearing and seeing could confuse the mind, but the blame should not be placed on “sense faculties,” but on the mind itself. Yang didn't blame the sense organs as most Confucians did, rather, like Wang Fuzhi, he emphasised the commanding and active role of “reflection,” the mental faculty of the mind, in all parts of the process of knowledge: “investigating things” or “ordinary understanding” and “extension of knowledge” or “rational and moral understanding.”¹¹⁶ He wrote:

Let the vulgar customs and speech and deed which are perceived by ears and eyes be measured according to Heaven's principles (天地之节文 *tianli zhi jiewen*); and let right and wrong, and good and bad be judged (or understood) by the mind. (了然于心 *liaoran yu xin*).¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Yang Changji, “Riji” (1894), in *Wenji*, p. 10.

¹¹⁵ In his discussion of “xinzhai” (心斋 the fasting of the mind) Zhuangzi quoted Confucius saying “Make your will one! Don't listen with your ears, listen with your mind. No, don't listen with your mind, listen with your spirit (气). ... Spirit is empty and waits on all things. ... If you do not keep [your mind] still – this is what is called ‘sitting but racing around’ (坐驰 *zuochi*)” See *Zhuang Zi*, ch. 4 “The world of men,” translated in Burton Watson's *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings* (1964), p.54-55. For the other reference see *Reflections on things at Hand*, translated by Chan Wing-tsit, ch.4 sec. 19 p. 130.

¹¹⁶ Wang Fuzhi considered there to be two principal mistakes in the conventional Song Neo-Confucian conception of the “investigation of things” (*gewu*), one of which referred to the Song school's underestimation of the significance of the mind's autonomy in the “investigation” part of process. Black points out that to value the role of intellectual activity in the empirical investigation was one important difference from the traditional viewpoint. See Black, pp. 183-186.

¹¹⁷ Yang Changji, “Riji, 1892” in *Wenji*, p. 6.

There are two levels of “reflection”: one takes what is provided by perception as its object; and one deals directly with what is “above form,” that is, abstract principles. That may suggest one of the reasons for Yang's emphasis on “deep reflection.”

We have mentioned the spontaneity of the moral mind. The driving force and motivation of seeking for *ren* and moral perfection do not come from external sources, rather from the instinctive moral and psychological demands of one's own nature. And for Yang this spontaneity had an epistemological support, for one's mind or thinking need not wait to be initiated by or confined to the external things as did the senses, it had its own independent functions and rules. “Reflection” was thus regarded as the extremely important means for understanding those moral principles (其当然 *qi dangran*) and the reason why things were the way they were. Without a thorough understanding of these ... it was impossible to achieve *ren*, just as a blind person had no sense of direction. In this way Yang spoke of “reflection as the foundation of being a sage.”

As the above discussion has shown, Yang's concepts of the mind and man drew upon the Confucian and Neo-confucian traditions, particular Mencius, Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai and Wang Fuzhi. Such a view of the mind and man lay down a cornerstone for the elaboration of his two crucial notions in his later years: valuing the self and comprehending the present. In addition to the idea of the mind, the concept of *cheng* became prominent in Yang's thought. The idea “Accumulating *cheng* and establishing one's exemplary deeds” was formulated by Yang in this period and became a consistent principle throughout his life.¹¹⁸ This concept will be discussed in the next chapter and chapter 9.

Yang's painstaking intellectual and spiritual quest in terms of self-cultivation marked this formative period. According to the extant materials, Yang's response to China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese and Kang Youwei's idea of the Great Unity can be found in two of Yang's poems written in the winter of 1894.¹¹⁹ The Hunanese Reform movement was a decisive event in Yang's intellectual and moral spiritual quest. Providing him with a chance to go out of the ivory tower of personal self-cultivation

¹¹⁸ The idea appeared first in his dairy 189, see *Wenji*, p. 2.

and enter into contact with Western learning and with national issues regarding China's social, political crises.

¹¹⁹ These two poems were recopied by Yang in his diary of the 4th day of ninth month, 1896. See *Riji*, p. 3.

Chapter 3

Yang's Reformist Thought and its Philosophical Foundation, 1895-1903

In the last few years of the 1890s, China experienced a dramatic political movement. In fact, reform is not a novel concept in the Chinese historical experience. The concept “reform” suggested not simply a linear change, but the revival of the ideal of the three dynasties of remote antiquity. That is why some prominent “reform” movements were known as “restoration” (中兴 *zhongxing*), including for instance, *Tangdai zhongxing* (唐代中兴), the restoration in the Tang dynasty of the Suzong emperor 肃宗 (756-772), or the most recent example of *Tongzhi zhongxing* (同治中兴, Tongzhi Restoration) in the late Qing. But the reform of 1898 was totally different from any previous “restoration” or “reforms” in Chinese history, for it attempted to break away from all the old patterns to touch on the realms of polity and ideology, stimulating a radical revolution which not only brought an end to the monarchy that had dominated China for two thousand years but also opened the gate for socio-political and intellectual radicalism in modern China.¹

The intellectual ferment of political reformism

There is no political movement without ideological preparation and intellectual guidance. The Chinese reform movement of 1898 is no exception. The appeal for change in the administrative and institutional realms fermented even before the Opium War (1842). It is evident in the writings about *jingshi* (经世 statecraft) of official-scholars such as Wei Yuan.² However, the influence of Western science, philosophy and political thought increased gradually during the three decades after the Opium War. There is no doubt that the introduction of Western social and political ideas, especially the idea of social Darwinian evolution, the Copernican

¹ For radicalism in modern China see Yü Yin-shi “The radicalization of China in the twentieth Century,” *Daedalus*, Spring 1993, 112-150.

view of the universe and a cluster of ideas concerning Western democracy, such as parliament, popular sovereignty and political participation played a significant role in the erosion of the view of cosmological kingship and in the rapid development of political reform. By the early 1890s the Western idea of political participation under a constitutional monarchy was openly discussed by a number of protagonists of the early movement for political reform. There were a variety of views concerning the desire to introduce Western parliament into China and a variety of approaches dealing with the question of bringing Western political ideals into Chinese practice. For instance, Tang Zhen regarded it mainly as a means of establishing contact between above and below, while Chen Qiu saw it as the key step towards reform of government structure and organisation. Furthermore, in contrast to Chen Qiu's idea that members of parliament should come from the officials of the six Ministries of government, Zheng Guanyin held that members of parliament should be elected by the people.³

Generally speaking, Western political ideals were regarded as a means rather than an end. This was mainly due to the fact that Chinese reformists were still restrained by the dichotomy "Chinese learning as substance and Western learning as function." It should be noted that it would be a mistake to ascribe this famous phrase to Zhang Zhidong. In fact the idea emerged around the period between the Tongzhi reign and the first decade of the Guangxu reign (1862-1884), when indifference and hostility dominated the attitude of Chinese gentry-literati towards Western culture. "The gentry-literati all regarded talking about Western learning as disgraceful. Those who talked of Western learning were seen as traitors and disdained utterly by their peers."⁴

However, the situation altered during the period of the self-strengthening movement. Zhang Zhidong's formulation called for the introduction of Western technology and science into China. Although they belonged to the category of "vessel" or "function," they had been finally given a legitimate reason and status in China. In spite of its

² Susan Mann Jones and Philip A. Kuhn, "Dynastic decline and rebellion" in *Cambridge History of China*, Volume 10 "The late Ch'ing", Chapter 3, p. 149. For more details of *jingshi* and Wei Yuan see chapter 1 of the present study.

³ Onogawa Hidemi, chapter 2, sections 1-3, pp. 49-74.

⁴ Liang Qichao, *Wuxu zhengbian ji* [The reform movement of 1898], p. 129.

apparently logical paradox and semantic ambiguity the phrase “Chinese learning for the essential principles, Western learning for the practical application” became a very popular and influential slogan after the Sino-Japanese War. Zhang Zhidong was one who gave the final touch of the formulation in his “*Quanxue pian*” [Exhortation to study] in spring 1898.⁵ By the early 1890s the advocates of political reform kept themselves in line with the principles of self-strengthening movement toward Western learning. However, the difference was significant, the reformers all intended to re-interpret the formula by emphasising the inseparability of *ti* (体 substance) or *dao* (Way) from *yong* (用 function) or *qi* (器 vessel). According to the Neo-Confucian ontological dualism, *dao* was inherent in *qi*, and *dao* as the superior form could not be manifested without *qi*, also representing concrete things. Hence, although Western learning was perceived as *qi* in fact it contained the *dao* (Way) that, the reformists felt, was the key reason for Western wealth and power.

Furthermore, the reformers also made full use of the theory of the Chinese origins of Western learning, using it as a psychological comfort to assure that to learn from Western political institutions was nothing less than the reintroduction of Confucius' approved ideal institution of the “three dynasties” of remote antiquity. Therefore, they spoke out in two voices: a political radical one, to urge political changes on the Western model, and a cultural conservative one, to “return to antiquity” (复古 *fugu*).

Indigenous ideologies remained the major source of inspiration for political reform as studies of the modern Chinese mind have shown. In addition to the interest in “return to the original text” of the Confucian Classics, the trends of opening up the classical non-canonical thoughts and Chinese Mahayana Buddhist texts also contributed to both the shaping of a radical political reformism and the adoption of a critical view towards the Chinese tradition.⁶ The paradigmatic example was Kang

⁵ Wang Ermin, “Qingji zhishifenzi de zhongti xiyong lun” (Meaning and implication of the formula “Chinese learning for the fundamental structure, Western learning for functional use” of Chinese intellectuals in the Qing time), *Dalu zazhi* [The Continent], 26:10 (1963):316-7. See also Onogawa Hidemi, p. 54.

⁶ For the trends of revival of interest in Buddhism and classical Chinese philosophies of non-Confucian schools in the late Qing see Liang Qichao, *Intellectual trends in the Ch'ing dynasty* (1963) and Hao Chang, (1971), p. 7-34. This view is reiterated in Hao Chang's chapter written for the *Cambridge History of China*, Volume 11 (1980) and elaborated in his latest study on the thought of Kang Youwei, Tan Sitong, Zhang Binling and Liu Shipei. See his *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning (1898-1911)*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

Youwei, whose radical political reformism began to take shape in the 1880s. Notably it took the form of a re-interpretation of the Confucian classics. If China had not been defeated in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5), China's transformation might have continued along a course of moderate and piecemeal change. However, China was instead pushed onto the track of increasingly radical change in every realm.

In the atmosphere of acute crisis following China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese war (1894-5), Kang Youwei seized the chance to launch a large-scale political campaign in Beijing. The *Gongche* petition (公车上书 *gongche shangshu*) of May 1895 and the establishment of the Society for the Study of Self-strengthening (强学会 *Qiang xuehui*) in August 1895 revealed clearly that the idea of political reform had moved to the centre of the self-strengthening movement. A study society (学会 *xuehui*), a new type of organisational and propaganda instrument established by the Kang Youwei, Liang Chichao and their supporters, promoted political reform ideas, in order to gain support from high officials, and also mobilise gentry-scholars and educated people. They were well aware of the significance of the newspapers in "channelling the ruling and the ruled into one mind" and enlightening the gentry-literati. Two newspapers were published by the Study Society, and the establishment of branches in other provinces was in preparation. But soon all of these efforts met with suppression from the Qing government. The *Self-strengthening Journal* [强学报 *qiang xuebao*], the organisational journal of the Society, was banned, by the government following provocative use of chronology starting with Confucius' birthday instead of the conventional way of designating the year, namely, according to the reign periods of the Qing dynasty. Furthermore, forming a private society ran counter to rules introduced in 1652 by the Qing government, but the real danger lay in its opening the gate to free political discussion and public criticism.

However, in eastern China, far away from the capital, two reform newspapers survived. *Shiwu bao* 时务报 [Chinese Progress] in Shanghai and *Zhixin bao* 知新报 [The China reformer] in Macao, became the most popular and importance mouthpieces for propagating Kang's reform ideals and Western political ideas and values. The newspapers provided a powerful intellectual stimulus for the world of the Hunanese gentry-literati and a source of thought to the reform movement in Hunan.

Into the storm of Hunan's reform movement

The Hunanese reform movement had its own background. Hunan was one of the provinces in which a fervent sentiment of anti-foreignism and opposition to Christian evangelisation were dominant in the first two years of the 1890s, and was, moreover, a well-known citadel of gentry conservatism. Hunan emerged as a centre of political, economical and intellectual reform in China while Kang Youwei's campaign through his self-strengthening society suffered a setback in Beijing in early 1896. Hunan's reform movement owed much to the joint efforts of certain able and enlightened provincial officials and a group of celebrated provincial gentry-literati.

Wu Dacheng 吴大澂 (1835-1902) may be seen as a crucial person who instigated the prologue of the Hunanese reform movement. After the anti-evangelising riot of 1891, Wu was appointed as a governor in Hunan. During his tenure from 1892-1894, working together with the Hunanese elite he led public attention towards promoting provincial agriculture, industry and commercial interests by introducing foreign technology and opening up to foreign trade etc. One of the guiding principles was not to jeopardise doctrinal values or "the Chinese as substance." In the realm of education, on the one hand, he supported the Cheng-Zhu tradition, one of the main streams of the Hunanese intellectual heritage, while on the other hand, he encouraged a study of statecraft, another important tendency of the Hunanese tradition. All of these constituted a real beginning for the later educational, institutional and economical reform movement in Hunan.⁷

His successor was Chen Baozhen 陈宝箴 (1831-1900). During his term as governor 1895-98 Chen pushed the Hunanese reforming trends onto a broader scale through his "new policy" which incorporated reorganisation of provincial administration, establishment of a mining bureau, promotion of private business and the creation of a new school – the School of Current Affairs (时务学堂 Shiwu xuetang), assisted by two notable high officials Huang Zunxian 黄遵宪 (1848-1905) and Jiang Biao 江标 (1860-1899), Hunan commissioner of education from 1894 to 1897.

⁷ C. Lewis, *Prologue to the Chinese revolution*, p. 40-1. See also Hao Chang, "Intellectual change and reform, 1890-8," in *The late Ch'ing*, pp. 300-1. For the historical documents see *Hunan jinbainian dashi jishu* [Chronological Record of major events in Hunan during the last hundred years] (1953)

While Huang's reform focused on legal and administrative matters, Jiang cast his eye towards directing the intellectual climate towards the acceptance of new ideas and new learning in Hunan. Jiang Biao's cultural-educational innovations had particular significance for the permeation of reform ideas, and the promotion of new learning among the Hunanese gentry-literati. Based at *Jiaojing* Academy at Changsha he launched a series of educational reform programme. New subjects – geography, mathematics and foreign languages – were introduced into the traditional curriculum. Publications of the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge Among the Chinese (广学会 *guang xuehui*, SDK) and other translations of Western history and politics were listed in the required reading material for Hunanese examination candidates. It is worth noting that one of these works, Robert Mackenzie's *The Nineteenth Century: A History* became one of the most important sources of Western democratic ideas and systems for Yang Changji. Topics referring to current affairs and a knowledge of Western history and politics were prominently featured in examination papers.⁸

More significant was the establishment by Jiang Biao of the first Hunan study society, Jiaojing Study Society (校经学会 *jiaojing xuehui*) which published its own journal every ten days entitled *Xiangxue xinbao* [湘学新报 New Journal of Hunanese study] in the spring of 1897.⁹ As the first Hunan newspaper it became an important forum for the discussion of reform and the spreading of new ideas. Unlike other newspapers and journals which emphasised politics, *xiangxue xinbao* stressed *xue* – study or scholarship- and avoided political discussion of state affairs and management. The underlying idea was that “*xueshu*, or studies and scholarship was the foundation of a nation; promoting studies could bring on talents for the state.” Instead of “political studies” the journal emphasised “substantial studies” including

⁸ See *Yuanxiang tongyi lu* [A collection of provincial examination papers in 1896 and 1897]. Jiang Biao published one tenth of the examination papers in November 1897. The book consisted of 10 volumes and 44 theses. The authors included Tang Caichang 唐才常 (1867-1900), Bi Yongnian 毕永年 (1869-1901), Fan Zhui 樊锥 (1872-1906), Yi Nai (易鼐), Pi Jiayou (皮嘉佑), Tan Yankai (谭延凯), Hu Yuandan (胡元炎) and Yang Yulin, etc, all of whom soon became key activists in the Hunan reform movement. Some of them, such as Tang Caichang, Bi Yongnian and Yang Yulin were later leading figures in the Chinese republican revolution. See Wang Ermin, “Nan xue hui” (part II) *Talu zaizhi* [The continent], 6 (1961):194 and Lin Nengshi, p. 16-7.

⁹ *Xiangxue xinbao* [湘学新报 New journal of Hunanese study] removed *xin* (新 new) and changed its name to *xiangxue bao* [湘学报] after the issue of 21.

history, historical materials, geography, mathematics, commercial studies and foreign relations.¹⁰

Jiang's educational and cultural-intellectual innovations have a particular significance for our study here, as his reform program relied to a large extent on the Hunanese provincial gentry and his students. Among them Yang Yulin 杨毓麟 (1872-1911), one of the closest friends of Yang Changji, was a key figure. Because of this advantage Yang Changji was more likely to come into contact with the new ideas and reform trends than other fellow Hunanese living in rural areas.

Yang Yulin, who changed his name to Yang Dusheng 杨笃生 in 1904, obtained the *juren* degree in 1897. Recommended by Jiang Biao he was selected as a provincial *bagong sheng* (拔贡生 excellent examination candidates selected and recommended by provincial state education commissioner) studying under the patronage of Jiang at Jiaojin Academy. His examination papers were included in *Yuanxian tongyi lu* (A collection of provincial examination theses of 1896 and 1897).¹¹ He joined the editorial board of *Xiangxue xinbao* and became one of its major contributors.¹² He turned down an official appointment as a county magistrate in Guangxi province accepting instead the School of Current Affairs' invitation to be a lecturer.¹³ As an activist in favour of political and radical reform in Hunan he later became one of a few Hunanese figures prominent in the anti-Manchu, republican revolutionary movement of the first decade of the twentieth century. His well-known pamphlet *New Hunan* was one of most influential anti-imperialist and anti-Manchuist writings of 1903, which marked a new stage in Chinese revolutionary thought.¹⁴

During the Hunanese reform movement, while Yang Changji studied at the Yuelu Academy in Changsha, the two Yangs met regularly at Yang Yulin's home to exchange ideas about Confucianism, reform and the pressing issues of China's

¹⁰ See "Xiangxue xingbao liyan" (Introduction to Hunanese studies), *Xiangxue xinbao*, ce 1.

¹¹ For *Yuanxian tongyi lu*, see footnote 8.

¹² According to *Xiangxue xingbao*, he was the chief-editor of the history section.

¹³ Yang Tianshi, "Yang Dusheng," *Minguo renwu zhuan* [Biography of Republican China], vol. II, p. 53.

¹⁴ The other pamphlets were: Zou Rong's *Geming jun* [The Revolutionary Army] and Chen Tianhua's *Jingshi zhong* [Warning Bell] and *Meng huitou* [Sudden Realisation]. Zou's work has been translated by John Lust, see his *The Revolutionary Army: A Chinese Nationalist Tract of 1903*, (The Hague, 1968).

political crisis.¹⁵ Under Yang Yulin's influence, Yang Changji plunged himself enthusiastically into the Hunanese reform movement, becoming a member of the Nan xuehui (南学会 the Southern Study Society), attending lectures and participating in seminar discussions.¹⁶ He raised the hot issue of the succession of constitutionalism (君民共主 *junmin gongzhu*) by people's sovereignty or democratic system (民主 *minzhu*) and discussed with Tan Sitong 谭嗣同 (1865-1898) modern Western ideas such as *minzhu* or "people's sovereignty" from the point of view of the fundamental Confucian ideal of humanity (仁 *ren*) with an emphasis on the principle of life renewal.¹⁷ In response to the incident of the German occupation of Jiaozhou Bay in Shandong province, and the pressing crisis of foreign powers dividing up China he raised the question of the military defence of Hunan with very detailed suggestions concerning the stationing of troops, communications and army provisions.¹⁸

Yang Changji also took part in the Nan xuehui's essay competition in June 1898 in which six topics were assigned, ranging from international events such as the current war between Greek and Turkey, and the raising of funds to aid overseas Chinese in Malaysia, to internal problems such as the advantages and disadvantages of borrowing money from people to repay foreign loans and borrowing foreign money to promote the people's welfare. The topic Yang chose was "Lun Hunan zunzhi sheli Shangwu ju yi xian zhengxin nonggong zhi xue" (On how Hunan should take precedence in the promotion of studies of agriculture and industry over the establishment of a Commercial Bureau under the imperial edict). His essay won third

¹⁵ For the two Yang's friendship see Yang Changji and Yang Yulin's poems written in Aberdeen, which were published in *The Tiger*, 1.3 (July 10 1914).

¹⁶ Wang Xingguo, *Yang Changji de shengping ji sixiang* (1981) pp. 31-3. The membership of Nan xuehui consisted of three categories: *yishi huiyou*, 议事会友 or organisers, who were the core of Nan xuehui in charge of policy-making; *jianglun huiyou* 讲论会友, lecturers who were well-known scholars invited by Nan xuehui to deliver lectures; and *tongxin huiyou* 通信会友, ordinary members or correspondence members, for if they were not in Changsha, they could communicate with Nan xuehui by letter to raise questions or exchange ideas. *Yishi huiyou*, 议事会友 were in fact the initiates and founders, though theoretically the members should be elected by all members. See "Nan xuehui dagai zhangcheng shi'er tiao" [The twelve general regulations of the Southern Study Society] *Xiang bao*, 34 (April 14 1898): 134. See also Wang Ermin "Nan xuehui" (part 1) *Talu zaizhi* [The continent], 5 (1961):154.

¹⁷ *Xiang bao* [Hunan daily news], 28 (April 7 1898):110a-110b.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 42 (April 23 1898):166b-167a.

place and was published in *Xiang bao* [湘报 Hunan daily] an organisational newspaper.¹⁹

Nan xuehui was initiated and established in the winter of 1897 by Tan Sitong and a group of Hunanese celebrated gentry-scholars shortly after the arrival of Liang Qingchao in Changsha. Pi Xirui 皮锡瑞 (1850-1908), a prestigious Hunanese scholar in the study of the history of Confucian texts, was chosen as president. From the outset, as Hao Chang points out, Nan xuehui was a creation of the radical wing of the reformist gentry-literati with the support of some provincial officials.²⁰ Delivering lectures, organising seminar discussions and publishing daily newspapers were the most important media through which the ideas of radical reformers, such as Tan Sitong, Tang Caichang, Yi Nai and Fan Zhui were publicised. Of more significance is the fact that in the mind of its founders, Nan xuehui was designed not only to play a general role in the education and organisation of gentry-literati but also to function as a preparation for setting up a local parliament in the southern part of China and as a essential step to the gradual achievement of popular participation and national parliament.²¹ The promotion of gentry power was seen as the keynote and was put on the top of these radical young reformists' agenda.

The School of Current Affairs was set up in the fall of 1897 at the suggestion of Wang Xianqian 王先谦 (1842-1917). According to intention of Governor Chen Baochen, Chinese learning and Confucian classics were set as the centre of the curriculum. At the surface level, the school seemed to be another education institution within the principle of self-strengthening enterprise. In fact, it became the most important forum for spreading Kang Youwei's reformism based on the bizarre doctrine of the three ages deriving from *Gongyang Chunqiu* [Annals of Spring and Autumn with Gongyang Annotation], and his radical interpretation of Confucianism, for Liang Qichao and three other young Cantonese scholars who were Kang's disciples were invited to teach at the school.

¹⁹ The news announcing the essay competition appeared in *Xiang bao*, on Sunday, 26 June 1898. From the issue 149, Sept. 8 1898 *Xiang bao* successively published the essays which won the first three places. Yang's essay appeared in issue 153, Tuesday, 13 September 1898, pp. 609a-610a.

²⁰ Hao Chang, "Intellectual change and reform, 1890-8," *The late Ch'ing*, p. 307.

²¹ See Liang Qichao, *Wuxu zhengbian ji* [Record of reform movement of 1898], p. 137.

The new cultural institutions reinforced each other and all of them pushed strongly to direct the Hunanese reform movement towards radicalism. However, around this time a split emerged within the reformist group, and in the summer of 1898 the divergence caused an open ideological debate. The announcement of the “Scholars’ Compact of Hunan” (湘省学约 *Xiangsheng xueyue*) signalled the formation of an anti-political-reformism force, which was supported by both conservative and moderate gentry-literati. The conservatives’ attack focused on the ideas of people’s rule, institutional change, equality and the criticism of Confucian ethics (纲常名教 *gangchang minjiao*) by radical reformists. The conservatives argued that there was no need to change institutions or the law, because Confucian ideology maintained the government through virtue and morality (德 *de*) instead of the law (法 *fa*). The Western nations had advantages only in technology and law which belonged to *xing’erxia* 形而下, or “with concrete form” implying “function” (用 *yong*) and “branch” (末 *mo*), while China was good at governing through morality, that belonged to *xing’ershang* 形而上, or “without form” implying “substance” (本 *ben*) and “root” (根 *gen*). Therefore there was no need for China to change her political institutions and way of government.²²

The leader of the conservative clique was Wang Xianqian, chancellor of the Yuelu Academy. It should be noted that Wang was a strong supporter of Chen and Jiang’s self-strengthening programs in promoting provincial economical strength and educational reform project. He also introduced mathematics and English into the curriculum of the Yuelu Academy in 1897. This may have marking the beginning of Yang’s study of English.

Although it is not clear precisely when Yang joined the Southern Study Society, we may infer from *xiang bao* that Yang’s involvement is very likely to have started around the spring of 1898. In his diary published in 1903 his urging for institutional reform and vehement opposition to monarchical despotism are unmistakable. Even at the time of the open ideological debate Yang did not change his stance in favour of political reform because of his teacher’s anti-political-reformism attitude. This can be seen clearly in his participation in the essay competition organised by the

²² Chen Luan, “Wuxu zhengbian shi fan bianfa renwu zhi zhengzhi sixiang” [The political views

Southern Study Society. In spite of divergence in political views, however, Yang still regarded Wang as his respected teacher. In Japan, when Hunanese students learned that Wu Qingdi 吴庆坻, commissioner of education, had assigned Wang Xianqian as the director of education committees (学务公所 *xuewu gongsuo*) they drew up a petition against it. Yang was asked to sign the petition, but refused.²³

During the reform movement Yang also took part in the Hunan Bu chanzu hui in Changsha (湖南不缠足会 Anti-Footbinding Society in Hunan), founded by Huang Zunxian, Xiong Xiling 熊希龄 (1870-1937), Tan Sitong, and Tang Caichang.²⁴ The society advocated female emancipation; foot-binding was regarded as a bad and cruel practice because of the physical and mental damage it caused women. The underlying concerns were not only that such a cruel practice was in conflict with the Confucian principle of humanity but that it also ran counter to Kang's utopian ideal of the "Great Unity," at the core of which was the idea of equality. Furthermore, it should be noted here that as a matter of fact, the changing of old and bad customs and practice was also considered by these reformist thinkers as a keynote in the development of political reform. Intellectually, the idea was rooted in the Confucian tradition of the integration of social and political elements.

Yang was also a supporter of Yannian hui (Society for prolonging life) founded by Xiong Xiling and Tan Sitong. Like the Anti-Footbinding Society, it was a society aiming at changing bad social practices.²⁵

Philosophical foundation:

Humanity based on the principle of the Perpetual Renewal of Life

Between 1895 and 1902, Yang's political thought came to maturity. To some extent the development of his political thought should be seen as a continuing of the pursuit of the moral-spiritual quest for the Confucian Way which was underlain by a

of people who opposed institutional reform during the reform movement of 1898], pp 147-170.

²³ Li Xiaodan, "Yang Huaizhong xiansheng yishi" (Some recollections on Mr Yang Changji), *Wenji*, p. 377-8.

²⁴ The idea of opposing the practice of the binding of women's feet was initiated by Kang Youwei in 1883. In 1895 Kang and his brother founded Yuezhong buchanzhu hui (Society of anti-footbinding in Guangdong). The "Society of anti-footbinding in Hunan" was clearly established under the influence of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. For Yang's involvement see Wang Xingguo, *Yang Changji de shengping ji sixiang*, p. 39.

fundamental three-fold concern: the ultimate potential of a human being, how best to fulfil that potential, and the individual's relation to society. Therefore, the two distinct, though correlated, concerns that dominated his thinking - the fate of the nation and individual self-realisation at a time of turmoil were reflected clearly in his writings during this period.

The commitment to "statesmanship" was now spelt out in his burning concern with the national crisis and in his very concrete reform programme. Like many of his reform-minded contemporaries, Yang was deeply convinced that reform was the only way to guarantee China's survival. His vehement criticism of the monarchic institution and orthodox socio-moral norms formed the most important part of his reformism and political thought. In his political thinking, he developed a critical attitude and consciousness, which, by the standard of his time, can be compared with the radical thought of reformers such as Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong, Tang Caichang, Fan Zhui, Bi Yongnian and Yang Yulin. Yang Changji's attack on the despotism of monarchy and Confucian social norms such as *jiao* (教 teaching), and his cry for political reform, were presented nowhere better than in his diary published in 1903.

'The great virtue of Heaven and Earth is the giving and maintaining of life.' The sovereign (君 *jun*) is thus responsible for assuring people's welfare (生 *sheng* or lit. life), and the function of *jiao* (教 teaching, education, or religion) guarantees the people's welfare (生 *sheng*, or lit. life) as an end. If the ruler possesses excessive power which leads to the disaster of national subjugation and genocide (亡种之祸 *wangzhong zhi huo*), we cannot give as a reason for not implementing reform (变法 *bianfa*) that it would undermine the authority of the ruler. If preserving the old customs will bring about national calamity, we cannot argue that institutional reform runs counter to *jiao* and not carry out reform. Furthermore, to bestow on people the rights they deserve (还民应有之权利 *huan min yingyou zhi quanli*) does not go against the doctrine of respect for the ruler; reform is in accordance with the natural law of Heaven and Earth (天地自然之理 *tiandi ziran zhili*), and does not violate the basic principles on which *jiao* (教 teaching) is based. Can there be any doubt about this? ²⁵

²⁵ Yang Changji, "Jingguanshi zhaji" (Reading Notes of Studio of Calm-Observation), *Wenji*, p.211.

²⁶ Yang Changji, "Dahuazhai riji" (1903), *Wenji*, p. 28.

The passage above was recorded in Yang's diary after discussion with Tan Sitong on "people's rule" (民主 *minzhu*) and "people's welfare" (民生 *minsheng*) in the Nan xuehui's seminar discussion.²⁷

Although terse and short, this passage articulates all the basic assumptions underlying Yang's political reformism. He urged immediate political reform and refuted openly any opposing arguments against reform, even though they touched upon the ultimate sensitive issue, that of monarchical authority and the Chinese political system which had lasted more than two thousand years and used to be thought of as among the best in the world. He condemned the monarchical institution for being autocratic, and for transferring all power into the hands of one man: this, he believed, was the crux of China's political weakness and economic poverty. Therefore he appealed loudly for giving back to people the rights that originally belonged to them. For Yang, the national crisis meant that loyalty to the monarch and the desirability of preserving current customs were no longer enough to justify opposition to institutional reform. Two themes are discernible at the centre of Yang's thought: an emphasis on the principle of "creation, (生 *sheng*)," the metaphysical foundation of the core Confucian ideal of *humanity*; and his "democratic" line of thought. Yang's criticism of the despotism of the monarchy and advocating people's rule drew upon these two essential assumptions.

The phrase "the great attribute of Heaven and Earth is the giving (and maintaining of) life" originates with the *Book of Changes*.²⁸ It laid the basis for Yang's entire criticism of monarchical despotism for driving people into dire poverty as well as his advocacy of "popular sovereignty" (民主 *minzhu*). What is the real implication of this proposition? What impressed Tan Sitong so much that he praised Yang with the words, "At a time when the subtle words and great principles of the sages and

²⁷ See *Xiang Bao* [Hunan's daily], issue no. 28, (7th April 1898); Yang Changji, "Dahuazhai riji, (1903)," *Wenji*, p. 28, and also his diary of 15th October 1914, *Riji* (1914) p. 79. Yang's question and Tan's answer are also included in *Tan Sitong quanji* [Collection of works of Tan Sitong] (Beijing, 1981), vol.1, pp.405-7.

²⁸ See the "Great Appendixes" of the *Book of Changes*, Sec. II, ch. 1. For the translation see James Legge, p. 381. There is a modification, which, though very slight, is crucially important here. The *de* (德) could be rendered as both "attribute" (Legge) and "virtue" (Stanislaous Lokuang). For Lokuang's translation see his "Chu Hsi's theory of metaphysical structure," *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism*, p. 72. While Legge's translation indicates the original meaning of the term, Lokuang's one denotes its later implication.

worthies have become obscure and clogged, only you are able to raise such a profound question. No scholar since the Qin dynasty has ever thought of it.”²⁹ Where does the profundity of the question lie? Understanding that “the great virtue of Heaven and Earth is the giving and maintaining of life” is indeed essential, for Yang's political thought is based on his philosophical perception of the Confucian ideal of humanity (仁 *ren*). To be sure, *humanity* was the most important source of Kang's ideal of the “Great Unity,” and Tan's idea of ether (以太 *yitai*) drew to a large extent on the Confucian ideal of *humanity*. What makes Yang's view of *humanity* distinct from them is his emphasis on the central Confucian concept of ontology: creation (生 *sheng*).

Sheng is one of the most important categories in classical Chinese philosophy. Semantically, the notion of *sheng* can be divided into four main categories: the first and primary one denotes “to produce” in the sense of giving birth, including all living creatures, men and animals. In this regard it can be rendered also as “to be born” or “to be produced.” It also means “growing” or “growth” as sprouts grow from seeds and grass and trees grow from roots and branches. Secondly, it refers to “existence” and “being alive.” The examples related to it can be seen in terms of “maintaining and nourishing life” (养生 *yangsheng*), a central theme of Confucian self-cultivation, or as “the three states of existence: present, past, future” (三生 *sansheng*) etc. It is opposed to “death.” Thirdly, it indicates all things which have life, namely, living creatures (生灵 *shengling*). Fourthly, it is used to denote mental activities, for instance, ideas or emotions that arise in the mind-heart (生心 *shengxin*), etc.³⁰ As a noun, *sheng* denotes “life,” as a verb it can mean “produce” and “generate,” or “transform” (化生 *huasheng*).

In the *Book of Changes*, the term of *sheng* and its reduplicative term *shengsheng* (生生, production through perpetual renewal of life) became prominent. For instance, “The great attribute of Heaven and Earth is the giving of life,” and “There is an intermingling of the genial influences of heaven and earth, and transformation in its various forms abundantly proceeds. There is an intercommunication of seed between

²⁹ See footnote 27.

male and female, and transformation in its living types (化生 *huasheng*) proceeds.”³¹ Metaphysically, in the ancient tradition of Confucian thought the terms were used mainly to denote the most basic contents and characteristic of the cosmic evolutionary course, that is, the universe was taken as the flux of life and everything that possessed life. The existence of the myriad things was formed by the integration of *yin* and *yang*, and this movement of integration never ceased. That is what the *Book of Changes* meant by “Production and reproduction is what is called [the course] of change.”³² *Shengsheng* thus was taken as the essence and synonym of *yi* 易 or “change,” the central theme of the *Book of Changes*. Furthermore, the concept of *sheng* was associated with *yuan* (元), or “origination,” the first qualities of the first hexagram of *qian* (乾 Heaven). It is also remarkable that the moral principle of human nature was also read into the attributes of *qian*.³³

In nineteenth-century China the idea of *yi* (易 change) provided in the *Book of Change* became one of the most frequently quoted sources for reform thinkers. They all believed that “an exhausted situation leads to change and this change then leads to success (变通 *biantong*).”³⁴ The change brought about alteration and the constant changes resulted in a lack of obstruction (通 *tong*). Where there was no obstacle, there was the penetration of the Way. Yang was no exception in holding this view, but he went further by emphasising the cosmological dimension of *yi* (易 changes), that is, *sheng* and *shengsheng*.³⁵

The central theme of *shengsheng* presented in classical Confucian cosmogony and cosmology was elaborated and refined by the founders of Song Neo-Confucianism. Men such as Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai and the Cheng brothers all made contributions. *Shengsheng* was represented nowhere better than in Zhou Tunyi's two short treatises,

³⁰ This is not a comprehensive list, but covers the most important aspects of the word relevant to this study. See Xu Sheng, *Jiezi shuowen*, in Zhang Dainian, (1989) p. 145-151, Giancarlo Finazzo, p. 138-9, and A.C. Graham, (1992), pp. 35-6, 108.

³¹ “Xici zhuan xia” [The Great Appendix], pt. II, ch. 5, see Legge, p. 393.

³² Yi, “xici zhuan”, chapter 5, see Legge, *Book of Changes*, “The Great Appendix” A.5, p. 356.

³³ See the *Book of Changes*, Tuanzhuàn [Treatise on the Tuan], sec. I, ch.1,2, and “Wenyan” [Supplementary Tuan and Yao] ch.1 See Legge, pp. 213-5, 408.

³⁴ In the *Book of Changes*, *kun* (坤 Earth and *yin*) was analogous to the closing of a door (implying still) and *qian* (乾 Heaven and *yang*) to opening (active). Therefore “The alternation between closing and opening they called change. The going forward and backward without ceasing they called penetration.” See “The great Appendix” A.11, in Legge, p. 372.

which, although by no means a systematic formulation, laid the pattern for the later development of Neo-Confucian cosmology and moral-metaphysics.³⁶

Accordingly, the evolutionary process of cosmic production was envisaged as the operation of the Great Ultimate through the two cosmic forces *yin* and *yang*. The interaction of *yin* and *yang* in turn was the source from which myriad things came into being. Zhou regarded it as the Way of Heaven, and ceaseless. Although *sheng* can mean being as opposed to Non-being, it cannot be understood in terms of “creation” in the Judaeo-Christian tradition of cosmogony, for Confucians and Neo-Confucians never conceived that the universe and the myriad things were “created” by an external and supreme force, namely the hand of God. While Zhou envisaged an evolutionary process based on the Great Ultimate and an interaction between the active cosmic force of *yang* and the passive one of *yin*, Zhang Zai's theory of the material force and the Great Void represented another explanation. He envisaged that the original state of universe was filled with *qi* (氣 material force) and the integration and disintegration of *yin* and *yang* material forces gave form to concrete things, as Chinese thought that any object had its own form. It was generally accepted that “matter came from form, and form came from *qi*, “vital force.” Unlike Aristotle's “primary matter”, *qi* (氣vital force) was active, although formless, it could assume any form. Furthermore, it was not restrained in any definite form, but was inclusive of all forms. It was characterised as “forming”, “transcending the form” and “active.”³⁷

Zhu Xi synthesised the two teachings to build a more coherent and comprehensive cosmology. Accordingly, the universe was seen as an all-embracing organic one dominated by a ceaseless flux of spontaneously self-generating life. As Tu Weiming puts it, this view of the universe and Nature can be marked by three basic aspects:

³⁵ Yang Changji, “Jiaoyu fanlun” (A general discussion of education), in *Youxue yibian*, no. 9 (August, 1903), p. 867.

³⁶ Zhuo Dunyi integrated the concepts of the Great Ultimate, *yin* and *yang* material force, five Agents and the two vital hexagrams of *qian* (乾 Heaven) and *kun* (坤 Earth) into a coherent and comprehensive theory of cosmogony and cosmology. His interpretations relating to the origin and evolution of the universe were acknowledged as the standard. It was presented in his two short treatises, esp. in the first part of *Taiji tushuo* [An explanation of the Diagram of the great Ultimate]. For an English translation see Chan Wing-tsit, *A source book in Chinese philosophy* (1969) p. 463. (Hereafter, *A Source Book*)

wholeness, dynamism and continuity.³⁸ In this light, we see that *sheng* denotes mainly a spontaneously self-generating cosmic life process.

No doubt, for Yang, *sheng* or *shengsheng* itself embodies the Way of Heaven and the ultimate principle of Heaven and Earth. In other words, the heavenly Way was manifested only in the process of perpetual renewal of life dwelling in unending cosmic changes and transformation of things and affairs. Therefore, when Yang spoke of “the great attribute of Heaven and Earth is the giving of life,” he meant the crucial implication of “production” or “giving of life.” For an individual to follow this heavenly principle or to realise this heavenly Way was to take the attitude of “honouring life” in terms of “nourishing and cultivating life.” In terms of the government of a nation, to maintain people's lives in terms of the promotion of the people's welfare was of prime importance.

The Neo-Confucians believed that “the principle is one and its manifestations are many.” This principle was nothing but the principle of humanity. One of the most important development of the concept of “humanity” in Song Neo-Confucianism was to read into “humanity” the cosmic principle of perpetual renewal of life (生生不已 *shengsheng buyi*) and the idea of seeds that generate (生 *sheng*). To associate *sheng* and *shengsheng*, the chief characteristic of the universe, with the concept of humanity can be traced back as early as the *Book of Changes*, as we mentioned above. It could be also found in Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒 197 -104 BC), a prominent Han Confucian, as well as in Zhou Dunyi in Song times.³⁹

However, it was not until the Cheng brothers that the relationship between *sheng* (production) and *ren* 仁 or humanity was first intensively studied and this version of humanity became prominent.⁴⁰ For the Cheng brothers, the Way of Heaven was

³⁷ Tang Chün-yi, (1956), p.119-121. Professor Tang also points out the fundamental differences between Chinese *qi* and Aristotle's “primary matter and the “matter” of Western science.

³⁸ Tu Wei-ming, “The continuity of Being: Chinese visions of nature” in his *Confucian thought* (1985), p. 35-50.

³⁹ Dong Zhongshu, “Delun”[On virtue] in his *Baihu tong*, see Chan Wing-tsit, “Ren de gainian zhi kaizhan yu Oumei zhi quanshi”[The Development of the concept of *Ren* and its interpretation in Europe and America] in *Zhongguo zhixue sixiang lunji: xian Qin pian* [Reading in Chinese Philosophy and Thought: Pre-Qin dynasty], Taipei: Cowboy Publishing Co. Ltd, 1977, p.7.

⁴⁰ Chan, Wing-tsit, “Ren de gainian zhi kaizhan yu Oumei zhi quanshi” (The development of the Concept of *Ren* and its interpretation in Europe and America), *Zhongguo zhixue sixiang lunji*

principle (理 *li*), and the Way was manifested clearly in *shengsheng*. But Cheng Hao emphasised more strongly than his brother the idea of *shengsheng*, the chief characteristics of the evolutionary process of universe. “ ‘Production and reproduction is what is meant by the Changes.’ It is that which heaven regards as its Way. To Heaven, the Way is merely to give life. What follows from this principle of life-giving is good.” And “origination,” the first qualities of the *qian* (乾 Heaven) hexagram and *sheng* were then bound together to enhance the supportive argument. “Goodness involves the idea of “origination”, for origination is the chief quality of goodness. All things have the impulses of spring (spirit of growth) and this goodness results from the principle of life.”⁴¹ “It is best to look into the vital impulses (生意 *shengyi* or the will to grow) of myriad things. This is ‘origination is the chief quality of goodness,’ which is what is meant by benevolence.”⁴² Thereby, in addition to love and altruism *humanity* had a new dimension: *sheng*. In other words, *sheng* came to share the characteristics of the perpetual renewal of the life of the universe, so that it was elevated as high as a universal principle. For whatever intention, *humanity*, the ultimate principle of morality, was read into the natural order and the universe was incorporated into a socio-moralistic framework. More importantly for the theoretical building of Neo-Confucianism, *ren* was then based on a more coherent and refined rationalistic and metaphysical basis than before. This *principle* had a two-fold quality: natural and ethical, with no distinction being made between two, for the distinct holistic world view of Neo-Confucianism.

Therefore, when Yang spoke of *tiandi ziran zhili* (天地自然之理 the natural law of Heaven and Earth), he embraced the basic principle of *humanity* as well. Both Kang Youwei's and Tan Sitong's versions of *humanity* were tinted with Mohism and Buddhism. They focused on the notion of universal love, on which their violent criticism of despotism and the utopian ideal of “the great community” relied. Unlike Kang and Tan, Yang emphasised the dynamic cosmic quality of the “production and reproduction” of *ren*. In Yang's mind, the concept *sheng* denoted not only the general and substantial characteristic of the universe, but also was seen as the

[Readings in Chinese philosophy and thought - per-chin dynasty], 1977, p. 7. See also his *A source book*, p. 521.

⁴¹ *Er Cheng yishu*, 30/5f, see Chan *A source book*, p. 532 and Graham (1992), p.111

⁴² *Er Cheng yishu*, 133/1f, see Graham (1992), p. 110-1.

primary creative quality of the Confucian ideal of *ren*. The principle of love and the ultimate goodness could only be manifested in the ceaseless process of life-giving and life-maintaining. In other words, only in the undertaking of life-giving and life-maintaining could humanity be fully realised. It may be true that the theme of the “perpetual renewal of life and humanity” was for long overshadowed by the dominant interpretation of benevolence and affectionate love as Tan described in his approving comment on Yang's argument. Anyway, for Tan, the profundity of Yang's thought lay in his remarkable and splendid approach to the concept of *ren* from the point of view of valuing life, which had been ignored by the majority of scholars, including Tan himself, since the Qin and Han dynasties. That may be seen as part of the reason why Tan was so impressed by Yang's insight into the Confucian ideal of *ren*.

Having shed this light, we will examine part of “the great attribute (or virtue) of Heaven and Earth.” *De* was originally a religio-moral concept. When it appeared in the early Western Zhou, it was already a fairly complex concept with a wide range of meanings.⁴³ Originally, it denoted an attitude that emerged as a regular behaviour in accordance with Heaven-decreed norms. Therefore, it often referred to conduct that took the concrete form of a bestowal of bounties by man. In the political aspect, it involved the ruler's conduct taking the form of a bestowal of bounties on the people in order to insure their well-being. This was what was called *zhengde* (政德 political *de*) and can be seen in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. Such rulers were called “sagely rulers.” Thus, *de* came to mean the attitude and conduct of bestowal of bounties by rulers or ordinary men in accordance with heavenly norms. It became one of *de*'s most basic meanings.

While *de* often referred to human moral characteristics and virtues in classical Confucian literature, new meanings emerged along with the development of Taoist cosmology. Daoist thinkers associated *de* with the productive and nourishing qualities of Tao. *De* was the embodiment of *Dao*, or in Guanzi's term, “*de* was the

⁴³ Donald Munro has provided a lengthy account on the term of *de* from the point of view of etymology, semantics and philosophical implications in classical Confucian and Taoist texts. See his *The Concept of man in early China*, pp. 99-112, 125-128 and his essay “The origin of the concept of *te*” in Appendix, pp. 185-197. See also Zhang Dainian, (1989), “the concept of *de* (virtue) and *daode* (morals)” 154-156.

dwelling place of *Dao*. It is through getting it that things live.”⁴⁴ Thereby, *Dao*'s “bounty” was viewed as *sheng*, or giving of life and fostering growth. Because of the two correlated meanings of *sheng*: “to give birth to” and “life” (that which is received), it could be also understood as Zhuangzi stated, “life is an expression of *de*”(生者德之光也 *shengzhe de zhi guang ye*).⁴⁵ Tao generated life and gave the nourishment that is manifested in “life.” It was *de*. What man received from Tao through its productive operation was life, it was also conceived of as *de*. That became one of the most important sources of the Taoist outlook of honouring life.

Therefore, in Taoist thought, *de* was used primarily as a cosmic-metaphysical term referring to heavenly virtues rather than in its Confucian sense of a plain moral term denoting human virtue. Zhuangzi was one of Yang Changji's favourite thinkers. Wang Fuzhi's writings and interpretation of *Zhuangzi* may have been the main source for Yang's interest.⁴⁶ He was influenced particularly by Zhuangzi's naturalistic worldview.⁴⁷ And when Yang talked of the “great attribute of Heaven and Earth” he implied its cosmic-metaphysical dimension as well as its meaning as a law of nature.

As was discussed above, *sheng* and *shengsheng* were linked with the Confucian ideal of *humanity*, which was regarded as an ultimate principle (理 *li*), while Taoist thought associated them with *de*, the embodiment of the productive quality of *Dao*. Both principle (理 *li*) and *Dao* thus referred to the ultimate law of nature. Yang understood fully the implications of the statement “the great *de* of Heaven and Earth gives and maintains life,” as is evident from his introduction of the concept of “the natural law of Heaven and Earth (天地自然之理 *tiandi ziran zhili*)” into his argument. For Yang, reform was in conformity with the “natural laws of Heaven and Earth;” any monarch who seized absolute power ran counter to the “natural law of Heaven and Earth.” Apparently, the “natural law of Heaven and Earth” is asserted as the ultimate principle. Everything should be brought to the front of it to be justified. This was a crucial step in the development of Yang's political thought. What does he mean by

⁴⁴ “Xinshu” in *Guan Zi*, translated in Munro, p. 125.

⁴⁵ “Geng sang chu” in *Zhuangzi*, (Shanghai, 1989) vol 8. P. 122. Translated in Munro, p. 125

⁴⁶ Yang Changji, “Dahuazhai riji” (1903), *Wenji*, p. 26.

⁴⁷ Yang Changji, “Dahuazhai riji” (1891), *Wenji*, p. 3.

the “natural law of Heaven and Earth”? The following passage from his diary may be used to illuminate the point.

There is a natural law of Heaven and Earth (天地自然之理 *tiandi ziran zhi li*), and there is a social-moral doctrine and code referring to the righteousness (义 *yi*) set up by men. One should explore intensively Heaven and Earth's natural law and not constrain himself by the socio-moral doctrine and code written by men. ‘There is also something which even the sage does not know’ and ‘is not able to put into practice,’ for a sage is a human being as well.⁴⁸ It is true to say that the knowledge and capacity of the sage go beyond that of the common people; it is untrue to say that a sage is able to know the principles and rules running through ten thousand generations in the world. The [object of] science (格物气质之学 *gewu qizhi zhi xue*) aspires (希 *xi*) to obtain knowledge of Heaven (lit. can be translated as “science aspires to become Heaven”), while the gentry-literati (士 *shi*) who restricted themselves to studying and practising the doctrine aspire (希 *xi*) to become sages. The Aspiration to become a sage (希圣 *xisheng*) is inferior to an aspiration to an understanding of [the principle of] Heaven (希天 *xitian*), and the [Confucian] moral doctrine (名教 *mingjiao*) is inferior to the [laws of] nature (自然 *ziran*). Having understood it, we come to realise how outstanding and remarkable Lu and Wang's thoughts are, and how they are beyond the reach of others. Lu Xiangshan's words ‘The six Classics are nothing but the footnote [of my thought]’ and Wang Yangming's advocacy of the teaching of ‘extending inner good knowledge,’ imply an appeal for freeing thought from man-made social moral doctrines and for intensive exploration of the natural law of Heaven and Earth.⁴⁹

It is clear that for Yang the “natural law of Heaven and Earth” was contrasted with the “social moral norms set up by man” and, while it referred primarily to scientific knowledge, it also included knowledge relating to the cosmic laws, orders and heavenly *dao*. While the “natural law of Heaven and Earth” suggested an objective and universal validity, the “social moral norms set up by man” imply its subjective and particular property. This involved a value judgement. The laws of nature or the cosmic principles were thus elevated to the highest judgement to which the entire social and moral code should be subordinate. Comprehension of cosmic principle was seen to be loftier than an understanding of man's aspirations to become a sage. It implies that even a sage should be subject to cosmic principles. While the halo above the head of the sage was waning, the idea of the authority of the heavenly principle was gaining prominence in Yang's mind.

⁴⁸ *Doctrine of the Mean*, ch. 12

⁴⁹ Yang Changji, “Dahua zhai riji, 1987-1903” in *Wenji*, p. 25.

The idea of the limits of knowledge of the sage derives from the Confucian classic *The Doctrine of the Mean*. Talking of comprehending the utmost reaches of the way of the mean, Confucius holds that “there is something which even the sage does not know, ... and is unable to put into practice.”⁵⁰ According to Cheng Hao and Zhu Xi the passage dealt with the twofold aspect of the Way. On the one hand, the Way was all-embracing and functioned everywhere, and was manifested in every aspect of the everyday lives of ordinary people. It was thus immense, all embracing and immanent. It could be known and put into practice by the ordinary people. On the other hand, its substance was hidden (not manifested) and even the sage was unable to comprehend it fully.⁵¹ Using this passage Yang came to proclaim that the “sage is a man”, a view also inspired by Wang Fuzhi, who noted “There is also something which even the sage does not know” implying that the sage was a “human being” who had limits to the extent of his knowledge and competence.⁵² Yang seems to be in agreement with Wang on this point. To view the sage as a “human being” reflects realisation of the existence of the self as an independent, self-aware subject. In this sense, it may be seen as a moment of “enlightenment” in the development of Yang’s thought. Anyway, by the standard of his time, Yang’s view of the sage was indeed radical. This may be seen as an all-important departure point in the development of Yang’s intellectual and spiritual quest. We see that from this point Yang developed his individualistic strain of thought with a strong emphasis on intellectual independence, moral autonomy of a Kantian kind, and self-realisation.

Western scientific knowledge and the new thought spreading among the Hunanese gentry-literati were no doubt also important sources of inspiration for Yang in his consideration of the “natural law of Heaven and Earth.” For Yang, Western science, which took nature and the law of nature as its subjects of study, undoubtedly belonged to the category of “the natural law of Heaven and Earth,” and was thus

⁵⁰ Chapter 12 in *Zhongyong* [Doctrine of the mean]. For translation see Chan Wing-tsit, *A source book*, p. 100.

⁵¹ Cheng Hao, “Zhongyong jie,” *ErCheng ji* [The works of the two Chengs]. Zhu Xi, “Zhongyong zhangju” in *Sishu zhangju*, cited in Lai Kehong, *Daxue zhijie, Zhongyong zhijie* [The Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean with interpretation and annotation], Shanghai, Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1998, pp. 135-141. For a modern study of the *Doctrine of the Mean* see Tu Wei-ming’s *Centrality and Commonality*, (1989).

⁵² Wang Fuzhi, “Sijie” (Waiting for explanation), *Chuanshan quanji*, vol. 13, p. 9730.

worthy of respect. He also read seriously the textbook of Western science translated by the Translation bureau of the Jiangnan Arsenal and SDK during this period.⁵³ The subject in which he was most interested was mechanics (力学 *lixue*, lit. study of the force). He didn't feel any conflict between these new scientific concepts and certain core ideas of Confucianism. On the contrary, they were fully used by Yang in order to support his new interpretation of the fundamental ideas of the Confucian ideal of humanity, such as *cheng* (诚 sincerity, or integrity), *zhong* (忠 faithfulness) and *shu* (恕).⁵⁴ Western learning concerning the study of nature was now elevated as high as the Confucian ideal of humanity presented in *shengsheng*. Both were conceived as the "natural law of Heaven and Earth," and all political actions and practices had to be justified with reference to the "natural law of Heaven and Earth."

Yang not only challenged the sacredness of the sage but also extended his criticism to *mingjiao*, the doctrine of three bonds that was the most sacred core of Confucian ethics. It should be noted that Yang is neither the only one nor even the first to attack the doctrine of three bonds. Tan Sitong's half philosophical and half political pamphlet *On humanity* was the direct source of inspiration. In fact, Tan's *On humanity* was not published until after 1900, although it had already been circulated among a limited circle, including Yang Changji who revealed that he had read it at the Changsha home of Yang. Yulin was one of the major contributors to *Xiangxue xinbao* [The new journal of Hunanese studies].⁵⁵

Tan Liuyan (namely Tan Sitong) vehemently attacked the doctrine of three bonds. I first heard about this from Mr Wang from Xiantan [county] in 1898 when I studied at the Yuelu Academy. I was full of doubts about it. However, once I had read his (Tan's) *On humanity*, I

⁵³ Yang Changji, "Quan xue pian" (Exhortation to study), *Wenji*, p. 202.

⁵⁴ There are no English equivalencies for *zhong* and *shu*, as two basic components of Confucian ideal of humanity. D.C. Lau simply transliterates the terms as *zhong* and *shu* in his translation of Confucius' *Analects*. James Legge deals with *zhong* through free translation and renders the *shu* as "reciprocity." Professor Chan Wing-tsit translates the terms as "conscientiousness and altruism" but at the same time he admits that there are many possibilities. However, the central meaning seems to be hardly mistakable. Essentially, *zhong* means "the full development of one's originally good mind" and *shu* means the "extension of that good mind to others." Thus, in any case, *ren* (humanity) involved two aspects: the self and others. See Chan's "On the translation of certain Chinese philosophical terms" in his translation of *Reflections on things at hand* (1967), p. 362.

⁵⁵ Hao Chang, "Intellectual change and Reform, 1890-8," in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 11, p. 311. Yang Changji noted that "I first read Tan Liuyang's *On humanity* when I was lodging in Dusheng's (namely Yang Yulin) home. See Yang Changji, "Lunyi leichao" [Classified quotations from *Analects* with annotations and commentaries] in *Wenji*, p. 80. For Yulin's role see the list of editors in *Xiangxue xinbao* [The new journal of Hunanese studies], *ce* 1.

came to realise that our country's doctrine of three bonds ... facilitated the tendency of brutality and tyranny. It demanded an absolute obedience of humble juniors to venerable elders and set no restrictions on these elders. The teaching of the superior man (君子之教 *junzi zhi jiao*) should require a father to be benevolent and a son to be filial. The venerable elders should not disdain the free will (自由之意志 *ziyou zhi yizhi*) and personal independence (独立之人格 *duli zhi renge*) of the humble juniors.⁵⁶

Although this passage was written in 1914, Yang's critical arguments of the doctrine of three bonds had not changed since reading Tan's work. His critique was aimed at the one-sided emphasis on the child's responsibility of filial piety. For Yang, the Confucian ideal of humanity advocated a natural reciprocity in personal relations, that is, parental love and care, instead of the obedience of the child as being primary and essential to the humanitarian principle of personal relations. According to Professor de Bary, Zhu Xi did advocate a natural father-son relationship based on equal love and care, which was regarded as one of the most important aspects of the Neo-Confucian liberal tradition.⁵⁷ However, at a practical level, the Confucian doctrine of three bonds did emphasise the children's obedience and responsibility of filial piety. It is possible that Zhu Xi may have inspired Yang, but Tan's *On humanity* seems to have been a definite and direct source of inspiration.

The new idea of respect for "free will" and "personal independence" was apparently also used as sanction for Yang's attack on the doctrine of three bonds. The ideas can be found as early as his pre-1903 diaries and were formulated explicitly in his essay "Jiaoyu fanlun" (A general discussion of education) (1903). However, Yang's iconoclasm by no means signified that he was ready to deviate completely from Confucianism. To an extent it may be seen as an expression of a longing to breaking out of a spiritual straight-jacket and advocate instead independent thought, as is revealed clearly in his appraisal of Lu-Wang's philosophy in the last sentences of the passage quoted above. No doubt the new ideologies, such as egalitarianism, free will, and personal independence provided the inspiration to challenge the entrenched doctrines; however, like Tan, Yang's critique draw extensively upon the Confucian ideal of *ren*. Yang was highly critical of the despotic domination of sovereign over

⁵⁶ Yang Changji, "Lunyi leichao" (Classified *Analects* with annotations and commentaries), *Wenji*, p. 71.

⁵⁷ Wm. T. de Bary, *The Liberal tradition in China* (1983), p. 31-2.

subject and father over son. This definitely ran counter to the essential principles and gist of Confucian humanism, which is why he spoke of what “the teaching of superior man” should be and why he reaffirmed the core value of Confucian humanity, namely *shengsheng wei ren* (生生为仁) or the principle of the ceaseless generation of *ren*.

Monarchy or democracy?

“Monarchical power” or popular sovereignty?

In terms of political thought Yang applauded the new ideas, such as *minzhu* (民主 people's rule, or democracy), *minquan* (民权 people's authority or people's rights) and *zizhu zhi quan* (自主之权 autonomy or self-governance and self-determination).⁵⁸ Drawing upon his perception of the Confucian ideal of *humanity*, and in particular, the principle of the “perpetual renewal of life” and the traditional “democratic” thought of *minben* (民本) or “people as the foundation of a state,” Yang made a passionate indictment of traditional despotism.

The spearhead of Yang's criticism was directed first at traditional monarchy which took the whole nation as its own private property. He felt rulers were interested only in how to secure their power and control, with no thought of taking care of people's welfare. He wrote:

After China was defeated in the Sino-Japanese War, the real situation of China's “accumulated weakness” (积弱 *jiruo*) emerged and was made known to the public. Therefore, the emperor and officials at court from above and ordinary gentry-literati from below all became concerned with the means and ways of self-strengthening through reform. Over the last two or three years, many new policies (新政 *xinzheng*) have been issued and New learning (新学 *xinxue*) has flourished in the capital and provinces. Nevertheless, though action has been taken, it has not been carried through; though energy has been devoted, the effect has been insufficient; though there have been some results, they cannot be further expanded efficiently. Why? It is just because of exhausted financial resources. ... China is located in the temperate zone. The richness of resources and products used to be pre-eminent among other nations (in the world). How was China reduced to such a state of “accumulated poverty” (积贫 *jipin*)? ... It is because the scholarship of politics (政学 *zhengxue*) in China is underdeveloped; furthermore, because the gentry-officials are interested

⁵⁸ The Chinese term *minzhu* can be used to refer to “people's rule” or “people's government,” or “popular sovereignty” and democratic system or thought as a whole. My translation of the term in the brackets is varied according to the particular emphasis in the context.

only in checking abuses (防弊 *fangbi*) and have no desire to promote what is beneficial [to the national economy and people's welfare] (兴利 *xingli*).”⁵⁹

The question Yang asked was how China, as a country rich in resources and a nation that had carried out the strengthening movement for about two decades, had fallen into such a critical state of “accumulated weakness” (积弱 *jiruo*) in the political sphere, “accumulated poverty” (积贫 *jipin*) in economic aspect and “an underdeveloped scholarship of politics.” In his view, the sorry situation was rooted in the ruler's selfishness, which was reflected clearly in the fact that the ultimate goal of the traditional polity was to keep officials and people under control in order to ensure maintenance of power, rather than any consideration of the economic development of the people's welfare. Yang's indictment of the traditional monarchy as the embodiment of the ruler's selfishness was strongly reminiscent of one of Liang Qichao's anti-despotic thoughts presented in his political writings published during 1896 to 1898 in *Chinese Progress* [时务报 *Shiwu Bao*].⁶⁰ Further explanation of Liang's notion of “preventing troubles” (防弊 *fangbi*) is required in order to understand Yang.

Liang regarded the idea and practice of *fangbi* as the root cause of the authoritarian repression of independent thought and scholarship since the Qin dynasty. He stated that the post-Qin rulers racked their brains in order to lay down various rules to ensure the honesty of the official and the obedience of the people so that they could maintain power and authority. “The political bans and prohibitions became increasingly strict;” “the ruler enjoyed the ultimate sanctity of his authority, while national strength was attenuating day by day.” Liang listed up to twelve major aspects of ill practice in the past of increasingly tightened political control in the

⁵⁹ Yang Changji, “Lun Hunan zunzhi sheli shangwuju yi xian zhenxing nonggong zhi xue” [Hunan should promote the learning of agriculture and industry first in the establishment of a Commercial Bureau in obedience to the imperial decree], in *Xian Bao* [Hunan's daily], no. 153, 13 September, 1898. Reprinted in *Wenji*, pp.16-20. (Hereafter, “Zhenxing nonggong zhi xue”)

⁶⁰ Liang's criticism of “preventing troubles (防弊 *fangbi*) rather than managing affairs (治事 *zhishi*)” appeared first in the article “Lun bubianfa zhi hai [On the disadvantages of a lack of institutional reform],” *Shiwu Bao* [Chinese Progress], 19th August 1896, and was then elaborated on in “Zhongguo de jiruo youyu fangbi” [China's accumulated weakness comes from prevention of what was harmful], *Shiwu Bao* [Chinese Progress], 21st Sept. and 27th October 1896, in vol. 9. (Hereafter “Jiruo youyu fangbi”). The first essay was one of 12 published under the general title “Bianfa tongyi” [A comprehensive discussion of institutional reform], the most important and influential political writings representing his reform and “democratic” thoughts.

name of “checking abuses” and argued that the motivation behind it was nothing but “selfishness” (私心 *sixin*). “The person who held tightened political control (防弊 *fangbi*) wanted the ruler to have [absolute] power and the ruled to have no rights. He deprived people of all autonomy (自主之权 *zizu zhi quan*, lit. the ‘right as master themselves’) and arrogated all authority to himself. That is what is meant by selfishness.” Liang associated the Western concept of *minzhu* (民主 democracy) with political “autonomy,” that is, to enable everyone to become his own master. “In the West”, he wrote, “each individual is said to have the right to autonomy (自主之权 *zizhu zhi quan*, or right of self-determination).”⁶¹ To understand the Western concept of “democracy” as “autonomy” was in fact the prevailing view. Not only Liang, but a number of his contemporary reform thinkers, such as Yan Fu, Bi Yongnian, He Qi (Ho Kai) 何启 (1859-1914) and Hu Liyuan 胡礼垣 (1847-1816), all shared this view.⁶²

Liang went on to address the two essential aspects of the concept of *quan* (权 rights). “What does ‘autonomy’ mean? It means that each individual has the personal right to do what is appropriate for him to do and to enjoy the benefits owing to him. There is nothing greater than this *gong* (公 impartiality), in doing so, the world becomes peaceful and harmonised.” Here Liang further defined “rights” in two aspects: “rights involved both exercising power and the assumption of responsibility for what you have done (实权 *shiquan*) and the right to enjoy the benefits (利权 *liquan*).” Liang argued, “no one can take on the entire jobs (or responsibilities) of the world, therefore, no one is entitled to enjoy the entire benefits of the people under Heaven 天下人 (*tianxia ren*).”⁶³ Therefore, “rights” were involved much more with “doing work” or “bounded duty for people’s welfare” rather than the enjoyment of privileges or benefits, as Liang emphasised repeatedly. It became one of the most trenchant arguments against despotism.

How did the idea and practice of *fangbi* lead to China’s powerless situation? “In China,” Liang argued, “persons who held tightened political control (防弊 *fangbi*)

⁶¹ See Liang’s “Jiruo youyu fangbi,,” *Shiwu Bao* [Chinese Progress] vol. 9. (21st Sept. and 27th October 1896)

⁶² Huang Kewu, “Qingmo Minchu de minzhu sixiang: yi yi yu yuanyuan” (Democratic thought in the late Qing and the early republican period: implications and origins), *Zhongguo xiandaihua lunwen ji* [Collected papers presented in “Symposium on the modernisation in China, 1860-1949] (Taipei: Institute of modern history, Academia Sinica, 1991) p. 375.

started with a power struggle (争权 *zhengquan*) and ended up evading duty (让权 *rangquan*);” because, when there were affairs of state that required attention, no one wanted to be involved. The son of Heaven handed it over to his ministers, and the ministers handed it over to the provincial officials. Everyone shifted the responsibility on to another. “Struggling for power violates other’s right, shirking responsibility (让权 *rangquan*) damages one’s own rights.” Liang came to associate the reason of a nation-state’s strength and weakness with the use of powers and with the protection of individual’s rights, for he believed that “a state consists of an accumulation of powers,” that is, as Andrew Nathan has put it, the rights of individual citizens add up to the strength and power of a nation-state.⁶⁴ “A state with a full array of powers” (全权之国 *quanquan zhi guo*),” he wrote, “is powerful; a state with less power will suffer disaster; a state without power is doomed. A full array of powers means a state in which each individual citizen exercises his own rights. “Less power” (缺权 *quequan*) indicates a situation in which there are some who have power while others have no rights.” A despotic state, like China, was in fact in a “powerless” position, because, Liang set forth, “originally, one person wanted to seize the entire rights and powers owing to the mass of people. But they were so vast and comprehensive that they went far beyond one’s knowledge and capacity. As a result, the rights and powers were dissipated and declined and nobody knew where they were.” When a state without powers met a state with a full array of powers, the former must lose (无权之国 *wuquan zhi guo wang*). Liang indignantly condemned the fact that “extreme selfishness” resulted in a “powerless” situation. He warned forcefully in his conclusion that “one who gives up eating in fear of choking must die, while the nation whose ruler refrains from actively doing things necessary and just pays overwhelming attention to preventing what is harmful [for one’s power] is bound to be annihilated.”⁶⁵

Thus we see that the criticism of “preventing troubles” (防弊 *fangbi*) has a two-fold implication: first the attack is directed against the egoism of individual monarchy; secondly it points to the political system of monarchy itself. From this perspective

⁶³ Liang Qichao, “Jiruo youyu fangbi.”

⁶⁴ For this point see Andrew J. Nathan, *Chinese Democracy* (1985), p. 50-1. Nathan provides a brief account of Liang’s idea of “accumulative weakness” and “checking abuse.” Part of my translation is based on Nathan’s.

we can understand what Yang really meant when he condemned the “monarchy centralising power” and China’s weakness due to the desire to do nothing but “prevent trouble.”

It is of the utmost importance that Yang’s political ideals developed beyond the level of protest against despotism that centred on the ruler’s egoism. Although a side-stream within the Confucian tradition, such protest had existed for centuries, reaching its height in the work of Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲 (1610-1695). We can now see that the call for political participation or “a popular sovereign” apparently emerged out of Yang’s thought. Thus the anti-despotic criticism was shifted from the egoism of the individual monarch to the political institution itself. It is evident in his appealing for “returning the rights to the people which had originally belonged to them,” and for institutional reform (变法 *bianfa*). It was expressed more explicitly in his effusive praise of Western democracy, “There is a Western saying, ‘everyone has the rights owing to him. (应得的权利 *yingde de quanli*, or “has the due rights”) and every individual has the duty to be fulfilled (应尽之义务 *yingjin zhi yiwu*).’ These words are an irrefutable and universally applicable truth.”⁶⁶

The term *yingde de* (应得的) is worth noting, because it could be rendered as “the rights that one is entitled to have.” If this is the case, it implies that there is a supreme entity that confers rights on the individual. Alternatively the term could be also interpreted as meaning “everyone has the rights that originally belong to him.” If this is so, it implies that rights are inherent from birth. Obviously, the latter explanation is closer to the line of Western liberal thought of “natural rights.” At any rate, one thing is clear; a strong awareness of rights and the assertion of rights was emerging, inspired largely by Western ideas. As for traditional influences, Yang could draw substantially on the Mencian heritage of populist thought (民本思想 *minben sixiang*), which referred to a political ideal of benevolent government and took people to be the foundation of a nation. As Hao Chang points out, there remains a significant difference between the Mencian ideal of “government for people” and the Western

⁶⁵ Liang Qichao, “Jiruo youyu fangbi.”

⁶⁶ Yang Changji, “Jiaoyu fanlun” p. 866-7.

“government by the people.”⁶⁷ Yang's adoption of the Western political ideal of democracy indicates a clear transition in his political thought.

However, Mencian populist ideas remained a major source of inspiration for Yang's anti-despotism and the idea of the “popular sovereign (民权 *minquan*).” It can be seen in his taking “people's welfare” (民生 *minsheng*) as the ultimate source of legitimating for the authority of the monarchy. The Chinese philosophy of political authority which derived mainly from three sources: the mandate of Heaven, the good will of the people, and the ruler's virtue, finds its best exposition in *Mencius*. The mandate of heaven, or will of heaven, was conceived not merely as a source of legitimating for the notion of kingship, but also as the ultimate judgement of the behaviour of individual monarchs. The king or son of heaven was only a steward, who was selected and conferred by the Mandate of Heaven upon the government for the welfare of the people. Heaven manifested its mandate or will in many ways, such as natural disasters or unusual phenomena, and more clearly in the people's approval and resentment.⁶⁸ “Heaven sees as our people see and hears as our people hear.” “The people are the root of a country, and if the root is firm, the country will be tranquil.”⁶⁹ Mencius quoted these great principles from *The Book of History* in order to elaborate his idea of *minben* where people were held to have primacy over *sheji* (社稷 the altars of the earth and grain) and *jun* (君 the Son of Heaven). Although kingship as an institution was never challenged in *Mencius*, he did formulate a doctrine of tyrannicide. Rebellion was not regarded as a right, but killing a despotic king was accepted as a solemn task to relieve people from suffering under the intolerant and cruel oppression of a tyrant. It was seen as an action that was completely in accordance with the Mandate and Will of Heaven.⁷⁰ Thus in the Mencian heritage of political thought there remained a prominent tendency to emphasise the “primacy of people” (民本 *minben*) in the sense of taking people's approval as the ultimate sanction for political authority of any individual monarch

⁶⁷ Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, p. 103.

⁶⁸ John C.H. Wu, “Chinese legal and political philosophy,” *The Chinese mind*, p. 213-9.

⁶⁹ “The grand oath” of King Wu, pt. II and “The songs of five Brothers” in the *Book of History*, cited in John Wu, p. 214, 215.

⁷⁰ That is why all the force of overthrowing the previous dynasty always gathered under the banner of “action in the name of the Mandate of Heaven (替天行道 *titian xingdao*).”

and the people's welfare as being of the primary importance in government (benevolent government, or government for people).⁷¹

As discussed above, the ancient concept of *sheng* or *shengsheng* was at the centre of Yang's perception of the Confucian ideal of humanity. To put it another way, during this period Yang formed a humanist *Weltanschauung*, which afforded him a philosophical basis on which his liberal democratic strain of thought drew significantly. He regarded it as the "principle of Heaven and Earth" (天地自然之理 *tiandi ziran zhi li*) and contrasted it with the social norms set up by men (人所立之义 *ren suo li zhi yi*), which he saw as the highest law or paramount authority. So it is not surprising that *minsheng* (民生 people's life and welfare), a combination of *min* (people) with *sheng*, (life and generation) was conceived of as being the most important feature in government and taken as the ultimate criterion, on which his diatribes against the despotism of monarchy and his appeal for institutional reform relied.

In shaping the concept of "popular sovereignty" (民主 *minzhu*), which was rooted in "people's life and welfare" Yang was profoundly influenced by Tan Sitong. This is evident from his questioning Tan about the adoption of Western democracy in China in the question time organised by Nan xuehui. Yang seemed to be profoundly perplexed about several popular arguments both in favour and against the realisation of democratic system (民主 *minzhu*) in China, as well as the arguments for constitutionalism. The confusion is reflected clearly in the divers and active thought of Kang Youwei's doctrine of Three Ages and its appropriate political system, and on the relevance of Western democracy to China.

I have read 泰西新史揽要 (*Taixi xinshi lanyao*, a Chinese translation of *The nineteenth Century: A History* by Robert Mackenzie), the thrust of which is to explore and support the advantages and values of democracy. Many Hunanese gentry-literati and scholars have spoken of *minzhu* (民主 people's rule), taking it as the generally acknowledged value in all states of the five continents, as being the most perfect, irreplaceable, and

⁷¹ Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, p. 102-3. For the Mencian idea of tyrannicide see Julia Ching, "Human Rights: A valid Chinese concept?" in *Confucianism and Human rights*, p. 72. For the controversy over the Mencian notion of the "primacy of people, considered by the modern scholars as essentially despotic or democratic, see Philip Huang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and modern Chinese liberalism*, pp. 20-2.

irrefutable truth. I have read Liang Zhuoru (namely Liang Qichao)'s "Lun junzheng minzheng dishan zhi li" (On the principle of a succession from the government by the monarch to the government by the people). And it says, 'a number of rulers (多君 *duojun*) existing at the same time in a state denotes the polity of the Age of Disorder; a state governed by absolute monarchy is the polity of the Age of Approaching Peace; in the Age of Universal Peace people's rule will be exercised. The age of government by multiple rulers can be divided into two different phases: the time of tribal chiefs and the time of feudalism. In the age of government by absolute monarchy there were also two phases: government by an individual monarch and government by a constitutional monarchy (君民共主 *junmin gongzhu*, lit. rule of both monarch and people together). The age of people's rule consists of two phases as well: the republican institution of presidential government and periods without a president.' He also cited the dictum 'It is great luck, there is a group of dragons without a leader' [in the *Book of Changes*] to prove his doctrine of a phase without a president. In the case of America today there will be further change.⁷²

The passage above shows vividly how Chinese gentry conceived of Western democratic ideals when they were first introduced into China. Following Jiang Biao's suggestion, Robert Mackenzie's *The nineteenth Century: A History*, (translated by Timothy Richard) and other publications of SDK were put on the list of required reading materials for Hunanese examination candidates. Modern scholars regard the book as "a vulgar third-rate history", yet it was nevertheless one of the major sources for an understanding of Western democratic systems and values for Yang and his fellow Hunanese.⁷³ In other words, it became the authority or standard for the Western theory of democracy. However, Yang discerned a difference between Mackenzie and Liang Qichao. While democracy (民主 *minzhu*) in Mackenzie's book was regarded as the paramount political ideal, Liang supported the idea of an age without leaders. Integrating Western political system with Chinese historical practices made Liang's eloquent arguments especially convincing. Furthermore, the utopian ideal supported by the dictum asserted in the *Book of Changes* seemed to have a particularly attractive power for Yang. That is why he claimed immediately

⁷² "Nan xuehui wenda 南学会问答 (Question and answer)," *Xiang bao* [Hunan Daily], 17 March 1898, pp. 110a-b. Reprinted in *Tan Sitong quanji* [Complete Works of Tan Sitong], Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, vol.1, pp.405-7. Yang Changji recorded Tan Sitong's answer in his diary of 15 Oct. 1914, see his *Riji*, p. 97.

⁷³ Paul Cohen, "Christian missions and their impact to 1900," *The Cambridge history of China*, vol. 10, p.581.

that “I quite believe in this principle.” This belief also drew on his own observation of the practices of the militia organisation in his home *du* (都).

My *du* (都) consists of ten *jia* (甲) and thirty-six civil corps (团 *tuan*). Because of his inability, the head (团总 *tuanzong*) was forced to resign, but no one succeeded. There is an opinion in favour of abandonment of the position of head, for the alternative of a public meeting in which affairs would be discussed and decisions made. Rather than letting the entire responsibility rest with one man, and the others not being involved with public affairs at all, it would be better to leave the rights in the hands of the people (权在众人 *quan zai zhongren*), and then everyone will let himself become involved. This is roughly equal to the initial stage of the so-called ‘phase without a president.’⁷⁴

The passage above reveals another aspect to Yang's perception of *minzhu*. The concept of “leaving rights in the hands of the people” was not derived from the concept of “natural right” but rather from a very practical consideration, that is, mobilisation of the people's participation. Since a state was not the property of a family under one name, the government of a state should no longer be the business of one man. In this way, the concept of people's rule was understood as ruling by the people or ruling without a leader.

Though Yang inclined towards people's rule or rule without a leader, the opposite voice could not be simply ignored, because it touched upon fundamental issues concerning the idea of cosmological kingship. For Yang, people opposed to the adoption of Western political institutions were not conservative, but loyalist and orthodox. They did not oppose Western learning, but for them it imposed severe restraints on agricultural, industrial and commercial experiences. They argued “China has a huge population. If we do not develop the economy China will divide and control will be lost. In this case we have to adopt Western methods (西法 *xifa*). If we talk about the great change of time, there is nothing greater than heaven. I don't know if Heaven can be changed, but I am really certain that we cannot discard the monarchy. If we change monarchy to people's rule, where is the place for the emperor?”⁷⁵ Obviously the question referred not to the particular emperor but to the notion of cosmological kingship.

⁷⁴ “Nan xuehui wenda 南学会问答 (Question and answer),” *Xiang bao* [Hunan Daily], 17 March 1898, pp. 110a-b.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Those who were opposed to people's rule also used the "Western" example to show that monarchical polity could bring about national power and strength. They asserted that "Russia is a monarchy, her power and strength is far superior to the republican and constitutional monarchic states. The rapid rise of Japan as a powerful and prospective state derived solely from the promotion of monarchic authority and government. Therefore, it is clear that the monarchy cannot be changed."⁷⁶ Yang did not comment on this, but these arguments themselves were hugely important as they referred not to a particular emperor but to fundamental issues such as the cosmic order, the social-political order and its embodiment in the human world and the cosmological kingship, the root source of the political authority of the monarchy and its embodiment in the human world. Furthermore, it was a question of bringing to an end a political system, which had existed for two thousand years; all of which forced Yang to undertake a theoretical and thorough consideration of the matter.

The opposition against the immediate introduction of Western democratic polity came also from the right wing of the Kang Youwei's reform campaign. The argument quoted by Yang originated in an article "Lun Zhongguo yi zun junquan yi minquan" 论中国宜尊君权易民权 (China should promote the authority of the monarchy and repress people's rule), written by Mai Menghua 麦孟华 (1875-1915). The thrust of the article is the political unpreparedness of the Chinese people and the seriousness of the powerlessness of the current monarch. Mai wrote, "Recently secret societies and bandit gangs in the provinces have called for the promotion of partisanship by flaunting the banner of the Western idea of rule by the people. So how could we promote the doctrine of rule by the people?" The solution, Mai asserted, was not to promote popular rule but to "enhance the authority and power of the monarch."⁷⁷ While advocating Western democratic ideals, these pioneering reform thinkers called also for enhancement of the monarchical power. That confused probably not only Yang but also others.

At the same time Yang heard of another suggestion by Liang Qichao for applying the British model of constitutional monarchy. "Mr Liang asserted elsewhere that

⁷⁶ Ibid.

development from the phase of coexistence of a number of rulers to one of absolute monarchy, from the absolute monarchy to people's rule was a natural process in accordance with the Heavenly Way (天道之自然 *tiandao zhi ziran*), but it had to proceed in a certain way. According to him, British constitutional monarchy (君民共主 *junmin gongzhu*) was the most suitable choice for China at present." The espousal of parliamentary institutions and the call for the polity of constitutional monarchy, which first emerged at the periphery of reformist thought of the 1870s and 1880s became the central issues in the discussion of China's survival and political reform among reform-minded Chinese scholars of the 1890s.⁷⁸ For Liang, as well as for Kang, his teacher, underlying the propagation of the polity of constitutional monarchy was not only the practical matter of the unreadiness of the Chinese people and the theoretical consideration of development in order and by stages but also his strong nationalist sense of a socio-political integration and national solidarity. This is evident in his proposal for Hunanese reform and his feverish activities in organising study societies. Thus we see that although Liang spoke of the polity of institutional monarchy, his focus was in fact on political participation and the promotion of "gentry power," which was regarded as the first step of, or preparation for, the future "popular rule" (民权 *minquan*).⁷⁹ However, in Kang's reform programme delivered to the emperor during the reform movement of 1898, Japan and Russia were suggested as the models for China to adopt. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that such an explicit suggestion of following British constitutional monarchy can be found nowhere in Liang's writings at that time.

The final argument listed by Yang attempted to find a compromise between two sides. "There are also those who held that the promotion of "people's rule" was not necessary to lead towards changing the current polity into a democratic system (民主 *minzhu*). It could be used to mitigate pressure on the monarch, and to enhance the people's morale (伸民气 *shen minqi*) in order to resist foreign aggression. In this way

⁷⁷ The article was first published in *Shiwu bao* 时务报 [Chinese Progress] in March 23 1897, and may have been reprinted in *Changyan bao* 昌言报 [Promoting Public Opinion], a journal published by Wang Kangnian in Shanghai, see Jian Bozang, *Wuxu bianfa* [The reform of 1898], vol. 3, pp. 111-3.

⁷⁸ Hao Chang, "Intellectual change and reform, 1890-8," *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 11, p. 280.

⁷⁹ Onongawa Hideme, pp. 200-4.

the monarch can be safe and secure. Therefore, the 'promotion of people's rule' meant indeed a protection of the 'monarch's rule'.⁸⁰

Yang felt the various pros and cons were "matters of great importance." Because he was not clear about them, he felt the need to ask someone who was better qualified. Even Tan Sitong himself was aware of the difficulty of providing clear-cut answers. However, his emphasis on the primacy of people did impress Yang. "The points made in *Spring and Autumn Annals annotated by Gongyang*," Tan replied, "were unusual and unconventional, there must be underlying implications, but even I do not dare to comment. Anyway, we should turn our eyes only on the people. Doing that which will free people from suffering is justified. If we follow this principle all ideas will become clear, logical and well reasoned." There is no doubt that Tan's point profoundly influenced the shaping of Yang's views of taking "people's life and welfare" (民生 *minsheng*) as the paramount source for judging the monarchy and even the tenets of orthodox Confucianism as state ideology (教 *jiao*). This can be seen in Yang's diaries.

Taking "people's life and welfare" as the ultimate standard of political legitimation implies a replacement for the Mandate of Heaven, that is, that "people's life and welfare" was no longer a reflection of the Mandate of Heaven, but was itself sufficient to be the ultimate source of political authority. This denoted a significant difference from tradition. This transition was important for Yang to commit to the ideal of the age of people's rule. The monarchy had lost favour in Yang's thought and the republic seemed now to be the ideal political system. During his period of study in Japan and Scotland he inclined towards overthrowing the Manchu monarchy in order to set up a republic, though he was never in favour of revolutionary methods.

There is no doubt that Yang meant the political authority of the people when he spoke of the people's rights. That is why he appealed loudly for "returning to the people the rights which originally belonged to them," and was in favour of granting a legislative power to the *xuehui* (学会 Study society). This liberal strain of thought combined with his overwhelming concern for people's life and welfare (not

⁸⁰ See footnote 70.

including the pursuit of happiness present in Western ideals) to characterised Yang's perception of democratic ideas and values.

Yet, like most of his fellow reformers Yang held an unfavourable view of the common people (民 *min*). He maintained that “farmers and handicraftsmen are simple and honest, these are their characteristics (性 *xing*) and habits (习 *xi*).” But at the same time they were described by Yang as “ignorant” and inclining towards “taking ease and being lazy.” Furthermore, they were separated from each other and lacked communication. Therefore, they needed somebody to guide, organise, and educate them. That was the *junzi*'s (superior man) burden and mission.⁸¹

Nevertheless, when it came to the relationship between “superior man” or “worthies” and the common people, Yang emphasised the importance of people as the foundation. Western science then became the new authority for supporting his view of the “people.” In drawing an analogy of the concept of “buoyancy” in Western mechanics he stated, “[A piece of] wood can float on water, because of terrestrial gravity (地心吸力 *dixin xili*). Water is heavy, while wood is light; [therefore] water tends downward and forces wood to go up and float. For similar reasons sage, worthies and heroes stand out among the common people.” Adopting Mencius' well-known idea of the division of labour, Yang went on, “farmers, handicraftsmen and merchants are engaged in heavy manual labour, therefore, they are driven downwards by an irresistible general trend. Gentry-scholars and “superior men” attend to the fine and subtle principles (or reasons), therefore they are pushed up by the common people.”⁸² Although the analogy is bizarre, it reflects vividly the effort Yang devoted in order to apply Western scientific principles to the Chinese socio-political situation. At the same time, Yang was also clearly aware of the importance of the common people and regarded them as the foundation of the Confucian “superior man” or the social and cultural elite. He stated emphatically,

If there were no water there would be no carrier (or bearer) for wood; if there were no ‘savage people’ (野人 *yeren*), the support on which the

⁸¹ Yang Changji, “Lun Hunan zunzhi sheli shangwuju yi xian zhenxing nonggong zhi xue,” *Wenji*, p. 17, 19.

⁸² Yang Changji, “Dahuazhai riji” (1897-1903), *Wenji*, p. 23.

“superior man” leant would be lost. The ‘savage people’ (野人 *yeren*) came before the ‘superior man.’⁸³

Here we do not find any sense of the Rousseauist paradox of the “noble savage.” There were two voices in Yang’s discussion of the people (民 *min*): the ignorant “savage people” and the people as foundation of a nation. The view of the grassroots as the foundation of “superior man” coupled with a strong sense of the Confucian “superior man’s” vocation to lead society was one aspect of Yang’s “democratic” thought. For Yang, as for most of his contemporaries, “ignorant people”, though seen as the foundation of a nation, needed a Confucian “superior man” to enlighten, educate and organise them. Therefore, it is not surprising that Yang regarded the “enlightenment of farmers, handicraftsmen and merchants” as “the most pressing task of reform.”⁸⁴ Such a view implies that Yang was fully convinced by Kang’s emphasis on the political unpreparedness of Chinese people for undertaking the institution of “people’s rule” (民主 *minzhu*). This fact is highly important for Yang’s commitment to the traditional idea that “education was the foundation of government.”

The above discussion shows that Yang’s conception of these ideas can be seen in his criticism of Chinese despotism and monarchic system which was drawn on the one hand from the Western liberal idea of the sovereignty at people, on the other hand from the traditional political ideal of “people as the foundation of a state”, a strain of Mencian thought characterised by an emphasis on the primacy of “people’s lives and welfare” (民生 *minsheng*). That which could give and maintain life was called *humanity*. This was the ultimate principle of Heaven and Earth, to which any social norms and socio-political orders set by men had to subject. Although Yang held a passive view of the political consciousness of the common people, the Western democratic ideals such as government for the people and by the people had taken root in Yang’s political consciousness during this period. His commitment to republican ideal never wavered from then on.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Individual and group, and individual's rights

As is commonly known, one of the foremost important sources of Western democratic ideals was liberal individualism, which was based on a belief in the autonomy of the individual. Therefore, it was inevitable that along with concepts such as “people’s rule” and “people’s rights,” the idea of individual rights, the core idea of Western liberalism, was also introduced into China. One of the most remarkable characteristics of Confucian political and ethical thought is the emphasis on the individual’s duties rather than his rights; however, it would be wrong to think that Confucian ethics denied either the rights of free speech, or freedom of thought. In Confucian humanism there is a deep respect for the individual and his dignity, and a profound sense of natural equality. All of these values are recognised, and all of these concepts are conceived of in one way or another. The notion of rights in the sense of modern Western liberalism and democratic thought, however, did not develop until the end of the nineteenth century when Western international law and democratic thought were introduced into China. It was quite common to conceive of “people’s rule” or “democracy” (民主 *minzhu*) as meaning “everyone had the right to be his own master” or “individual autonomy” (自主之权 *zizhu zhi quan*). Men such as Yan Fu, Liang Qichao, Bi Yongnian and Liu Shipei 刘师培 (1884-1920) all shared a sense of the individual being morally autonomous and in possession of certain rights. To associate the Western concept of individual autonomy with the Confucian and Neo-Confucian traditional spirit of seeking individual moral autonomy was a common inclination.⁸⁵ However, certain ultimate values of Western democratic ideals, such as an individual’s freedom, human rights and the idea of a person as the end not the means were engulfed in larger concerns of collective interests and rights, and national wealth and power.⁸⁶ But in the case of Yang Changji we find an exception. In comparison with Yan and Liang, Yang emphasised individual autonomy to greater extent.

⁸⁵ Huang Kewu, “Qingmo minshu de minzhu sixiang: yiyi yu yuanyuan” (Democratic thought in the late Qing and the early republican period: implications and origins), p. 375, 290. Kang Youwei is an exception as he thought, “the present is the Age of Approaching Peace. It is therefore necessary to disseminate the doctrines of self-rule and independence.” See Hsiao K’ong-ch’uan, *A modern China and a new world*, p. 86.

⁸⁶ Hao Chang’s study of Liang Qichao and I. Schwartz’s study of Yan Fu have shown that Liang’s notion of *qun* (群 group) and Yan’s concern with national wealth and power were the main reason for them holding back from Western radical liberal individualism.

Yang's perception of the notion of rights was closely linked to his understanding of individual's rights and people's rights, which were intimately interrelated. On the other hand, it was also entwined closely with traditional Confucian views of the individual and the self and the individual's relation to state and society. His discussion of *quanli* (权利 right) can be found encapsulated in an article entitled "Jiaoyu fanlun" (A general discussion of education) which appeared in *Youxue jibian* [Study abroad and Translation], a journal published by Hunanese students in Japan.⁸⁷ Although the article was published in August 1903, three months after he arrived in Japan, it should be considered as the outcome of his thought in the period from 1897 to 1902 before he came into systematic contact with Western thought. The article centred on a cluster of ideas regarding the themes of the individual and society: the individual's relations to and role in the family, society and state, and his rights and duty in the sense of what was due him as a human being. It was in this context that Yang's discussion of *geren zhi quanli* (个人之权利 the individual's right) developed.

Having considered the Western democratic system as supporting the view that each individual had rights owing to him as well as appropriate duties to fulfil, Yang came to assert the supreme importance of "individual's rights" for the preservation of the "[collective] rights of all" (全体之权利 *quanti zhi quanli*).

The 'individual's right' is one integral part or element (一分子 *yi fenzi*) of the [collective] rights of the whole (全体权利 *quanti quanli*). If an individual forfeits his rights, one component (一分 *yi fen*) of the [collective] rights of the whole has been lost (or has become incomplete).⁸⁸

Yang's approach to the relationship between the individual and society is based on the part-whole way of thinking. The whole consists of, rather than contains, the parts. If any part of the whole is missing, the whole would not be considered to be complete. Apparently, here Yang's stress is on the dependence of the whole on the parts rather than *vice versa*.

The argument reminds us immediately of the Spencerian idea of "social aggregation," a key concept of his doctrine of "social organism" introduced by Yan

⁸⁷ It should be noted that the article "Jiaoyu fanlun," is unsigned. For a discussion of the authorship of the article see Appendix.

⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 867

Fu systematically through the translation of Spencer's *A Study of Sociology* published in 1903. Although Yang may not have been able to read the work at that time, the Spencerian theory of social organism was already known among the Chinese gentry-literati through Yan's other writings between 1895 and 1898. For instance, his 1895 article "Whence strength?" was replete with Spencerian brickwell, crystal-mineral metaphors and with the analogies of comparing biological organisms to society and nation-state by discussing the reciprocal relationship between the individual and society. Several scholars have suggested that there was inconsistency between Spencer's holistic functionalism and his uses of an organic analogy, on the one hand, and his methodological individualism and political liberalism, on the other. To put it another way, Spencer's notion of social organism suggested a kind of socio-historical determinism. Furthermore, ontologically, the status of the individual was the most feeble, since he or she was simply a particle or a small cell in the social organism. All of these are considered to form the antithesis of his "rugged liberal political individualism."⁸⁹

Yang did not define further the notion of the "[collective] rights of the whole" here or elsewhere; the understanding of his notion should be placed in the broad context of the rising of the notion of "groups" which, as some modern scholars have suggested, marked the beginning of the development of citizenship consciousness, which was inaugurated by Yan Fu and elaborated by Liang Qichao.⁹⁰ Under the influence of the evolutionary theory Yan and Liang hold that only those who were good in forming groups could survive in the long evolutionary process of mankind. Hence, the solidarity within groups or the "society-nation" was the only way for China's survival in the arena of international ruthless competition, and such "groups" or "society-nations" were embodied explicitly in the democratic polity of Western nation-states. Yan and Liang believed that the collective energy which ultimately accounted for the wealth and power of a society-nation were latent in the individual. In other words, the individual's energy was considered as the source of national wealth and power, and the quality of the social "integration" depended on the quality

⁸⁹ Peel 185-191. Schwartz, (1964) p. 57, 75, 255 n28.

⁹⁰ Liu Zehua and Liu Jianqing, "Civic association, political parties, and the cultivation of citizenship consciousness in modern China, in *Imaging the People*, (1997) p. 41-5. For an excellent account of Liang Qichao's notion of groups (qun) and "new citizens" see Hao Chang, (1971).

of individual “units” or simply, individuals. A wealthy and powerful society-nation necessarily required autonomous individuals and citizens. Such a view formed a consensus among reform-minded Chinese literati in the 1890s.

Along with this way of thinking Yang considered the collective rights of the whole as a kind of substance that could be accumulated, added up, or reduced; the more was accumulated or added up, the more powerful was the substance. Therefore, it is no wonder that Yang regarded the full realisation of the individual's rights as a safeguard for the collective rights of the whole. He did not see any conflicts between an individual's rights and collective ones. Such a view of the relationship between the individual and society or the “part-whole” outlook is decisive. Soon we will see how Yang emphasised the importance of the quality of individual citizens for national wealth and power and his unwavering commitment to the intellectualistic and educational approach to social and political reform. Furthermore, this view made it possible for Yang to advocate the idea of the autonomy of rational agents without being worried about a Spencerian dilemma.

Yang's conception of individual rights is backed up by his philosophical thoughts about the autonomy of the individual. The capability and necessity of an individual's self-direction and self-governance were considered as essential qualities for the citizen of a wealthy and powerful state. Individual rights could be preserved only when one could completely realise his autonomy. Yang argued:

Everyone has his own attributes, while every thing has a cause and effect of its own. Just like ears and eyes, hands and feet, each has its own application (or functions). Only the individual himself can experience and be conscious of (当体自喻 *dangti ziyu*) his own feelings of hunger and repletion, cold and warmth. When an outsider talks about them, what he said cannot tally with reality. Therefore, one's conduct is decided by one's will; and one's will is decided by one's knowledge (知识 *zhishi*). Individual autonomy (自由 *ziyou*) is the foundation of morality (道德之本 *daode zhi ben*).⁹¹ If one's conduct is not decided by one's own will, but

⁹¹ “Ziyou” does not exist in classical Chinese, as Professor De Bary has pointed out. It is a compound word, consisted of two parts: *zi* (自) and *you* (由). In classical Chinese *zi* could mean “from, in, or of itself, much like the prefix “auto” in English; and “you,” “from” or “out of”. The standard translation for *ziyou* is “liberty” or “freedom.” Such translations suggest a strong political implication, such as freedom of speech, freedom of thought or belief. But in the context of Yang's usage, it should be read primarily as “being able to follow one's own inclination” in the sense of a Kantian ethical term of self-determination, suggested by Professor De Bary. I have adopted De Bary's rendering. See De Bary, *The liberal tradition in China*, (1983) p. 43.

influenced by other people (众人 *zhongren*) and he is forced to chime in with others, one would lose one's independent spirit (独立之精神 *duli zhi jingsheng*) and capacity of judgement (or decision) (判断能力 *panduan nengli*). Thereby, an individual's rights are devastated and deprived, and can be no longer be preserved.⁹²

Yang's argument concerning the autonomy of the individual started with the individuality of perception (or individual differences of sense experience) that ran counter to traditional assumptions of similarity of sense experience for all human beings on which the Confucian doctrine of human nature and the entire system of Confucian humanism were based.⁹³

However, noting differences or particularities of human sense experiences by no means indicated that Yang was no longer committed to the fundamental Confucian position of the commonality of human nature or that Yang's stress on individual autonomy was alien to the Confucian tradition. As modern studies have shown, it is incorrect to claim that the ideas of dignity, independence, and autonomy are foreign to the Confucian tradition. All these values are deep-rooted in the Confucian and Neo-Confucian thought in their own way.⁹⁴ The apparent divergence between traditional Confucianism, which focused on the commonality of human experience, and Yang's assertion of individual difference of sense experience is in fact a matter of emphasis.

⁹² Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu fanlun," p.867.

⁹³ The Confucian ideal of humanity was based on the doctrine of human nature which drew largely on the metaphysical assumption of the commonality of human nature. Confucius believed that "By nature, men are nearly alike. By practice they get to be wide apart." (*Analects*, 17:2) Mencius, following the same line, provided a more elaborate formulation of the commonality of human nature, writing of "four beginnings" (四端 *siduan*) that were inherent and processed by everybody. Such a view was buttressed by the telling evidence derived from the similarity of sense experience of human beings. (*Mencius*, 6A:7) These positions formed the basis for enduring elements in Confucian thinking about human nature. This discussion of the difference between Yang's position and traditional thought was inspired first by reading Irene Bloom's essay "On the Matter of the Mind: the metaphysical basis of the expanded self" in *Individualism and Holism* (1985) pp. 302-4. For a discussion of how Confucian and Neo-Confucian thought drew on humanity or "good knowledge" to describe the commonality of human nature, see also de Bary, "Individualism and Humanitarianism" in *Self and Society in Ming Thought* (1970), esp. p. 151. Tu Wei-ming, "On the Mencian perception of moral self-development" in *Humanity and self-cultivation* (1979), pp. 57-68, and his "Neo-Confucian ontology: A preliminary questioning" in *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as creative transformation* (1985) pp. 153-5.

⁹⁴ T. de Bary, "Individualism and humanitarianism in Late Ming Thought" in *Self and Society in Ming Thought* (1970), pp. 144-225, and his *The liberal tradition in China* (1983), especially, chapter 3 pp. 43-66. Tu Wei-ming, *Confucian thought: Selfhood as creative transformation*, (New York, 1985).

Yang assumed that in keeping one's self-governance and self-determination the "will" played a pivotal role. The will, commanding one's action, depended upon one's judgement and decision-making, both of which were determined by one's knowledge (知识 *zhishi*). Such a view of "will" is very close to the Western sense and goes far beyond the conventional Confucian usage. As Irene Bloom's study shows, the concept of will in Confucian thought refers to the sense of resolve, purpose, or determination rather than to the making of choices, which underlies the idea of autonomy in the Western liberal tradition.⁹⁵ In Western thought, the will is conceived mainly to be of the faculty of decision, or justification for action. It supposes that only human beings, as rational agents have a will, involving two aspects: a deliberative capacity, or a practical intellect to form practical judgements for actions; and an executive capacity, to apply these judgements in one's actions. For instance, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) maintained that the will was grounded in the practical intellect. In Kant, will was conceived partly as *Wille*, a capacity for autonomous legislation, and partly as *Willkür*, an action-generating capacity.⁹⁶

To view *ziyou*, or "following one's own will" as the foundation or sources of the morality and arguing for the individual's independent spirit in terms of self-determination is strongly reminiscent of Kant's notion of autonomy. The root of the concept can be traced back as early as the ancient Greek thinkers. It was first clearly expressed by Thomas Aquinas and was one of the central social and political values of the Enlightenment. The idea found its most systematic exposition in Spinoza and Kant.⁹⁷ Kant believed that man had the capacity to form judgements about which actions were rationally justified by the use of one's reason, and which were not based on desire. Thus man was able to legislate universally valid principles through his will. Moral principles were thus believed to have originated in the exercise of reason, that is, these moral principles were laws that we gave to ourselves. Therefore one's thoughts and actions were not bound by any principles that did not derive from the exercise of his own reason, or by any sources of authority external to reason.

⁹⁵ Irene Bloom, pp. 300, 302.

⁹⁶ Thomas Pink, "will," *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 9:720-1.

⁹⁷ S. Luke, p. 52.

Positively speaking, man as a rational agent was the source of authoritative normative principles.⁹⁸

Although Yang did not mention the sovereign authority of law-giving, he did considered man to be a rational being and recognised reason to be the source of morality. That makes him very close to the essence of the Kantian notion of autonomy. Being well versed in the Confucian doctrine of *humanity*, which held that moral strength and springs were inherent in men themselves, precisely and more within the mind-heart, may have been a great help for Yang when it came to embracing the Western ideas of autonomy. In fact, there are significant differences between Kantian and Confucian ethics, since Kant distrusted human nature and insisted that he had discovered a set of transcendental categories in the human mind, while Confucian thought held that morality was deeply rooted in human nature.⁹⁹ However, to a certain extent, they share similar ways of thinking, namely, both look inward for the source of morality. That might be why Yang asserted in one of his later writings “the ethics of our country emphasises mostly individual independence.”¹⁰⁰

Apart from considering autonomy as a feature of the individual, Kant associated the notion of autonomy closely with the idea of freedom, which lay at the heart of the modern Western liberalism and democratic theory, namely that freedom was a basic right to self-governance.¹⁰¹ Similarly, Yang also associated the achievement of “individual rights” with personal autonomy. We will see soon that Yang’s concept of individual rights was fuelled by calls for independence of the individual and for freedom of thought. Such a view of individual’s autonomy is very close to the essential elements of the Western notion of autonomy.¹⁰²

Underlying Yang’s emphasis on the autonomy of the self was his belief that all men were equally endowed at birth with both the moral potential to be good and the moral discrimination necessary for acquiring intellectual knowledge; these were essential

⁹⁸ For Kant’s concept of autonomy, see Andrews Reath’s “Autonomy, ethical,” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1998), 1:586-592.

⁹⁹ Tu Wei-ming, “Neo-Confucian ontology: a preliminary questioning” p. 154-5

¹⁰⁰ Yang Changji, “Lunyu leichao,” *Wenji*, p. 70.

¹⁰¹ See, Andrews Reath, “Autonomy, Ethical,” pp. 586-588.

¹⁰² S. Lukes, *Individualism*, (1973) pp.52-8.

and integral elements of human nature. The view of the so-called “natural equality” originated in the classical and Neo-Confucian tradition of the teaching of the self, man and human nature to which he was profoundly committed.¹⁰³ The emphasis on the “autonomy of the self” reflects Yang’s view of political governance, that is, the essence of government lay in universal self-discipline. This is a view rooted deeply in the Neo-Confucian tradition.¹⁰⁴ That is why he claimed that if such “individual’s rights” were lost, “it could cause everyone to lose his rights, since the things could affect each other. As the result, the [collective] rights of the whole would no longer exist.”¹⁰⁵ This is reminiscent of Liang’s “powerless nation.” As to the “spirit of self-independence which Yang regarded as the core and substance of the “individual’s rights,” he set forth:

Therefore, the education of the citizen (国民 *guomin*) should aim at teaching them to have the spirit of self-respect and self-dignity (自尊自重之精神 *zizun zizhong zhi jingshen*), the sense of taking up responsibility (责任之观念 *zeren zhi guannian*), the ability to earn one’s own living (独立自营之能力 *duli ziying zhi nengli*) and the knowledge of judgement between right and wrong (判断是非之知识 *panduan shifei zhi zhishi*).¹⁰⁶

The passage above is of prime importance, for it reveals clearly the four-fold dimensions of Yang’s version of individualism on which his concept of individual rights drew. Again, the influence of Kantian notion of autonomy is reflected clearly in the quotation above. Self-respect called for people to recognise their value as

¹⁰³ For the “nature equality” in Confucian thought please see Donald Munro’s excellent discussion in his *The concept of man in early China* (1969). Human nature, according to Confucians, had three dimensions: animality involved with the basic instincts such as eating, drinking, sex etc.; sociality and social tendencies based on *ren* (human heartedness); and the evaluating mind in terms of moral discrimination involved necessarily with intellectual knowledge such as reasoning. The last two in particular, Confucians held, were unique for human beings, and hence received most attention. Accordingly, all men were equally endowed with *ren*, a moral potential to be good and an evaluating mind which guided the social conduct to be in conformity with the principle of *ren*. Environmental factors, mainly denoting the economic and the educational, were considered to be the source of the differences in moral excellence among men. Since Confucians held that no one had innate defects in moral endowments, they believed firmly that man was perfectible through education. It is encapsulated in Mencius’ dictum “the sage and I are the same kind.” Theoretically, Confucians accepted that all men could become a sage, an authentic human, that is quite different from Judaism and early Christianity which spoke of the equal worth to God of all their children. Based on the idea of natural equality, Confucians believed in the “education panacea” and promoted a popular education regardless of social status. The idea of natural equality left the most lasting and far-reaching influence on Chinese philosophy, political thoughts and polity.

¹⁰⁴ Theodore de Bary, *The liberal tradition in China*, p. 52.

¹⁰⁵ Yang Changji, “Jiaoyu gailun” [On education in the broad sense] p.867.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p.867.

persons, together with the concept of “a respect for persons, that was at the centre of Kant’s ethics. Kant used these ideas as a basis for both legally enforceable rights and ethical duties to respect others and oneself.”¹⁰⁷

Apart from the sense of responsibility and the spiritual, ethical and intellectual aspects, Yang considered that the “spirit of self-independence” required the backing of economic self-reliance. Thus, the material basis for the realisation of the independent-spirited individual was also taken into account. Around a decade later, this line of thought was expounded by Yang in his essay “Zhisheng pian” (On managing one’s life).¹⁰⁸

Yang’s version of the “individual’s rights” also includes a strong call for the freedom of thought which started with a vehement demand for smashing the fetters of dogmatic scholarship.

In order to be at one with the “independent-spirit,” we should above all eradicate the age-old malpractice of the autocracy of the teachers (教师专制之积弊 *jiaoshi zhuanzhi zhi jibi*) and show explicitly the necessity of free scholarship. I have ears and eyes, I can investigate things; I have mind-heart and thought, I can investigate principles thoroughly. My judgement of what is right and what is wrong is based on my own reasoning. Although it may provoke the blame of the whole world, I am not deterred.¹⁰⁹

When we compare the passage above with the spirit of the early philosophical liberalism at the end of seventeenth century in the Western world, no one could dispute the similarities. As Bertrand Russell articulates in his influential work *History of Western Philosophy*, liberalism at the end of seventeenth century was a new movement in politics and philosophy. Protestants were the first to challenge the restricted spiritual and intellectual control of the General Councils. They asserted that what was true and what was good should be no longer ascertained by social institution and Councils, but by individuals themselves. In the realm of philosophy, Descartes’ epistemology, particularly his well-known dictum “I think, therefore I

¹⁰⁷ See Thomas E. Hill, Jr., “Respect for persons” and Cynthia A. Stark, “Self-respect” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1998), Vol. 8, pp. 283-7, 635-8.

¹⁰⁸ This is a two-part article that appeared in *New Youth* issue four, December 1916 and issue five, January 1917 respectively. Yang believed that independent-spirited individuals made an independent country possible. He criticised the Chinese family system for fostering a spirit of dependence, and Chinese marriage custom for being harmful to the individual’s self-reliance.

¹⁰⁹ Yang Changji, “Jiaoyu fanlu” (A general discussion of education), p. 867.

am,” served as the basis of individual knowledge; he held that the starting-point for each was his own existence and experience. His significant concept of the “clearness and distinctness of ideas” and his theory of three kinds of knowledge were based in this general disposition.¹¹⁰ Thus, Yang's view that the determination of truth and moral judgement was based on individual perception and reason is in accord with the spirit of the intellectually individualistic strain of early Western liberalism.

More pointedly, Yang called for the rejection of bowing to the authority of previous intellectual dogma and social customs. This does not mean that he was ready to repudiate Confucianism or other traditional ideologies; on the contrary, he would continue to accept the teaching of his predecessors. However the acceptance was no longer unconditional, but had to be judged by his mind. He identified the person who had no “independent spirit” with the slave (奴隶 *nuli*) of thought.

I insist on it even though the whole world opposes me. Be fearless and undaunted. Do what the whole world dares not to do and speak out what the whole world fears to say. And then one can take up the great burden, be sustained in a crisis, and stand upright and independently in a world fraught with fierce competition and strife. A man without independent spirit is what is known as a slave.¹¹¹

Here we see that Yang's demand for freedom of thought has begun to move towards the idea of free speech. He had an extremely high regard for an ideal type of moral characteristic *teliduxing* (特立独行), or “determined to act independently regardless of the opposition of men of high status and the public opinion of the entire nation.”

The term *teliduxing* originated from “lijì”(The recorder of rites), a section of the *Book of rites*.¹¹² It was elaborated especially by Han Yu 韩愈 (768-824), a man of letters and Confucian thinker in the Tang dynasty, in his well-known essay entitled “Bo Yi song” (Eulogy of Bo Yi).¹¹³ The concept of *teliduxing* reflects one important aspect of the Confucian vision of the individual's autonomy, that is, an authentic

¹¹⁰ Bertrand Russell, *A history of Western philosophy*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1946, p. 620-623. For the three kinds of knowledge see *Dictionary of Philosophy* edited by Dagobert D. Runes, (London: Peter Owen Ltd., 1972) (7th impression), for the entry on “Cartesianism,” See pp. 45-6

¹¹¹ Yang Changji, “Jiaoyu fanlu” (A general discussion of education), p. 867.

¹¹² Thomas Metzger, *Escape from predicament* (1977), p. 40.

¹¹³ Yang reiterated the importance of the autonomous spirit in *Lunyu leichao*, a small book of extracts from the *Analects* to which he appended annotation and commentaries, published in 1914, by citing Han Yu's term “teli duxing.” See Yang Changji “Lunyu leichao” in *Wenji*, p. 70.

Confucian superior man had to be ready to challenge the morally polluted world of conventional opinion and established authority.¹¹⁴ Thus the term used by Yang implies the importance of an autonomous spirit for actualising the individual's independence.¹¹⁵

In this regard we may find a parallel in Spinoza's thought, in which the distinction between freedom and servitude is at the centre. Spinoza's remarkable notion of freedom appeals strongly for the active exercise of the power of thought.¹¹⁶ Yang pushed the theme further by associating it with the severe problem of national enslaving. He asserted that, if the people of the whole country had no spirit of independence, the entire nation would be undoubtedly enslaved. For Yang, the real danger lay in the prevailing inclination to worship blindly mediocre teaching:

The people of our country do not understand what the truth is. They just look at what the name suggests (以名为义 *yiming weiyi*), and do not investigate the reality. They urge people to do good things just as the old teaching suggested; even though this leads to national subjugation and genocide, they don't know where the fault lies. They advise people not to do bad things, but they don't care about the result even if it costs the fortune of nation and race. Those who have become the slaves of antiquity and social customs cannot be people capable of taking up the mission of promoting what is beneficial and of abolishing what is harmful. Therefore it is hardly likely that they will not become slaves of *tianxing* (天行 natural process) and slaves of foreign countries. In a word, the reason why our nation has suffered accumulated poverty and weakness, and sunk so deep into hell that we cannot free ourselves from the ocean of misery, lies in our scholarship and doctrines (学说 *xueshuo*).¹¹⁷

Obviously, Yang held that the independent spirit should be based in intellectual knowledge and independent thought. To accomplish independent thought, man needed to free himself from any fetters of ancient doctrines and conventional social customs. The term *tianxing* (天行 natural process) is undoubtedly indicative of the influence on Yang of nineteenth-century Western evolutionary theory, represented by Darwin, Huxley and Spencer, which first became known among Chinese scholars-officials and gentry-literati through Yan Fu, through his several essays published

¹¹⁴ Thomas Metzger, p. 40.

¹¹⁵ In chapter 9 I provides a full-length discussion of Yang's concept of individual's independence and Western concept of autonomy.

¹¹⁶ S. Lukes, p. 54.

during the years 1895-1989 and his *Tianyan lun*, a paraphrastic translation of Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*. One of the key ideas of the book is to assert that moral efforts were necessary applied in human society, just as a horticulturist did in garden cultivation. Huxley maintained that "social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another which may be called the ethical process."¹¹⁸ In Yan Fu's interpretation, it reads "the dominance of force is an aspect of the natural process (天行 *tianxing*); the dominance of virtue is a result of order established by man (人治 *renzhi*); where there is peace and order man is dominant."¹¹⁹ The implication of praising human efforts or individual's subjective activities was welcomed by Yang Changji. He associated it with freedom of thought.

Yang also allowed his perception of "individual rights" to become involved with the fundamental issues of "heavenly principles" versus "human desires" (理欲 *liyu*) and of "righteousness" versus "self-interests" (义利 *yili*) in Confucian ethics. Yang did not distinguish the concept of *renquan* (人权 human rights) and that of *geren quanli* (个人权利 individual's rights). His discussion was held in the context of *rendao* (人道) or "humanity," (or the Way of man) as a means of affirming the legitimacy of "reasonable" egoism (利己 *lijì*) or "enlightened self-interest" and to attack the orthodox idea of the repression of individual desire.

Since ancient times, all Confucian doctrines have considered that the pursuit of humanity (人道 *rendao*) should guard cautiously against seeking one's own welfare (or interest). This is really unreasonable. It has hindered human rights (人权 *renquan*), impeded progress and has been the enemy of humanity (人道之蠹贼 *rendao zhi maozei*). However it has been looked up to as a standard, which no one dares to question or transgress.¹²⁰

To affirm the legitimacy of self-interest runs counter to the cardinal tenets of orthodox Confucian ethics, according to which, being a moral human had nothing to do with self-interest. Furthermore, the pursuit of individual self-interest, (利 *lì*) was regarded as the ultimate source of evil. Of all things likely to distort man's moral judgement and deflect him from his moral purpose, pursuing one's own interest was

¹¹⁷ Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu fanlu," p. 868.

¹¹⁸ T. H. Huxley *Evolution and Ethics*, 1893-1943, (1947), p. 82

¹¹⁹ Yan Fu *Tianyan lun*, Pt. 2p. 47, cited in Schwartz, *In Search for wealth and power: Yen Fu and the West*, p. 109.

¹²⁰ Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu fanlu," p. 868.

regarded as the strongest, the most persistent and the most insidious.¹²¹ Zhu Xi developed the well-known theme of “preserving the heavenly principles through eliminating of human desires.” This idea took a dominant place in Chinese ethical thought.¹²²

However, there was also a strain of thought within the Chinese tradition that held the positive view of individual desires and interest. This line of thought could be traced back as early as Yang Zhu 杨朱 (c. 440- c. 360 BC) and Mozi 墨子 (between 500 and 396 BC). Though this line of thought was not the main stream, sometimes it became influential and gained the upper hand. For instance, we may consider Chen Liang 陈亮 (1143-1194) and his Zhejiang school, a utilitarian trend of thought which became prominent and prevailing in the Song dynasty. Chen Liang, a contemporary of Zhu Xi, criticised Zhu's overwhelming emphasis on the principle of righteousness in order to despise the principle of gaining benefit. This line of thought never vanished and found an echo in the thought of Confucian thinkers, such as Li Zhi 李贽 (1527-1602), who held that egoism (私 *si*) was ultimately the source of altruism (公 *gong*).¹²³ This school of thought had an influence upon major seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Confucians such as Gu Yanwu 顾炎武 (1613-1682), Yan Yuan 颜元 (1635-1704), Li Gong 李恭 (1659-1733) and Dai Zhen 戴震 (1723-1777), whose thoughts went onto form the important part of the intellectual context of late nineteenth-century China.¹²⁴

Among such Confucians was one who directly affected the intellectual context and climate in which Yang grew up, that is, the Hunanese philosopher Wang Fuzhi. As to the fundamental issues of heavenly principle as being in the general or public interest (公 *gong*) versus human desire as individual self-interest (私 *si*) and righteousness (义 *yi*) versus profit (利 *li*), Wang Fuzhi emphasised the importance and necessity of *li* (利, profit) for the achievement of humanity. He argued that “to reflect on profit and harm without transgressing principle is precisely *ren* (仁) and *yi* (义). *Ren* and *yi* are

¹²¹ D. C. Lau, “Introduction” to the translation of *Analects*, p. 20.

¹²² Zhang Liwen, *Zhu Xi sixiang yanjiu*, [The thought of Zhu Xi] p. 519-571.

¹²³ F. Wakeman, *History and Will*, p. 156.

¹²⁴ Tillman, Hoyt Cleveland, “Yan Fu's utilitarianism in Chinese perspective,” in *Ideas across culture*, ed. by Paul Cohen and Merle Goldman (Cambridge Mass. & London: Harvard University Press 1990), pp. 63-84.

invariably profitable.”¹²⁵ Furthermore, influenced by Zhang Zai, Wang held the inseparability of heavenly principle with human desire. Along the same line he held that human nature also included instinctive drives. He maintained that it was totally wrong to achieve *humanity* by eliminating desires (除人欲 *chu renyu*), since he held that Principles (理 *li*) dwelled within desires. Without desires principles would lose their bearings.¹²⁶ Largely influenced by Wang Fuzhi's positive view of the instinctive components of the human self, Tang Sitong vehemently criticised the repression of human desires and individual self-interest.¹²⁷ As shown in chapter 2, Yang Changji had been exposed to Wang Fuzhi since his early spiritual and intellectual quest. And during the reform movement in Hunan he was deeply attracted to Tan Sitong; thus it is clear that the endogenous influence of this line of thought became one of the main sources of Yang's valuing of the individual and his desires and interests.

However, beside the endogenous influence, the direct impulse seemed to be the nineteenth-century Western evolutionary theories. In addition to the novel view of the biological evolution of nature including human species, the catch phrases of Spencerian Social Darwinism, such as “the struggle for the existence,” “natural selections,” and “survival of the fittest,” found tremendous resonance in China, not only among pioneer thinkers, such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, but also among reform-minded gentry-literati.

Yan Fu was considered to be a Chinese Spencerian Social Darwinist, but instead of Spencer he had chosen to translate Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, a work written with the aim of opposing certain key points of Spencer's social and political thought, such as naturalistic ethics (任天为治 *rentian wei zhi*), “rugged individualism,” his celebration of the struggle between individuals and nations, and his *laissez-faire* opposition to state interference.¹²⁸ The real reason for Yan's choice of translation still puzzles students and scholars of modern Chinese thought.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Wang Fuzhi, DSSD, p. 704, Black, p. 266.

¹²⁶ Ian McMorran, “Wang Fuzhi and Neo-Confucian tradition,” pp. 443-5.

¹²⁷ Hao Chang, *Chinese crisis*, pp. 83-4.

¹²⁸ The traditional image of Huxley as a staunch Darwinist was challenged by scholars in the 1970s, on the grounds that he disagreed with Darwin on important points, such as “natural selection”, one of the key tenets of Darwinian evolutionary theory. Huxley instead upheld the idea of common descent. Furthermore, he never accepted Darwin's gradualism, but supported a saltatory view of

The significance of the issue lies in the fact that it would intensify our understanding of nineteenth-century Western evolutionary theory in modern Chinese thought. The picture that Yan Fu was overwhelmingly influenced by Spencerian Social Darwinism would have been misleading, as Pusey points out, mainly because he never tried to defend anyone in the dispute between Spencer and Huxley. It would be a simplification of the story of Western evolutionary theory in China. Yan never agreed with Spencer unreservedly and completely. For instance, he was dissatisfied with Spencer's notion of "non-action" implying not a strong government with human interference, but rather a rugged individualistic bent. He thought that Huxley's work was just a remedy for Spencer's "shortcomings" (末流 *moliu*).¹³⁰ Yan was fully aware of and agreed with Huxley's thesis that "social progress means a checking of cosmic progress at every step" and that "the ethical progress of society depends not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in

evolution. Now he is generally seen as an evolutionist but no longer of a Darwinian kind. See *Routledge Encyclopaedia of philosophy*, (London, 1998), 4:594-595. Therefore "Darwinism" is not the same as either Huxley's thought and teaching, or Spencer's evolutionary ideas and ethics, since they emerged before the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1895) and Spencer was more a Lamarckian (a French biological evolutionist) than a Darwinian. It seems inappropriate to use the term "Darwinism" to denote Huxley's teaching or Spencer's as previous scholars of modern Chinese thought did. (For example Pusey chooses it for the title of his book (*China and Charles Darwin*) and Guo Zhengzhao used it as a general term for Western evolutionism). What Yan Fu introduced into China and what left the most impact on modern Chinese thought is in fact the nineteenth-century Western evolutionary theory and ethics mainly represented by Darwin, Huxley and Spencer. To specify the term would help to refine our thought and avoid confusion in further discussion.

¹²⁹ Benjamin I. Schwartz, *In search of wealth and power* p. 98-103. Li Zehou disagreed with some of the reasons suggested by Schwartz, such as the "brief, vivid, and almost poetic" style of Huxley's account. Li pointed out that the motivation for choosing Huxley was explained by Yan Fu in his "preface." Yan Fu was attracted to Huxley's trenchant argument against Spencer's view of the application of cosmic principles to social and political problem. Furthermore, Huxley provided an intensive account regarding the self-strengthening and preservation of the race that most concerned Yan. See Li Zehou, "Lun Yan Fu" [On Yan Fu] in *Zhongguo jindai sixiang shilun* [Essays on history of modern Chinese thought], (Beijing, 1986), pp. 263-9. Guo Zhengzhao's view is different from the above two. He maintained the more important fact to be that Huxley's work agrees with Yan Fu's profound sense of crisis and the special requirement of China's situation. Huxley's notion of "human action" or "human art" is in accordance with the traditional Chinese position "Man will triumph over nature." See his "Daerwenzhuyi yu Zhongguo" [Darwinism and China], pp. 676-9. To view Yan Fu as a "Chinese social Darwinist" has been recently challenged by James Reeve Pusey. He suggests that it would be misleading to call Yan Fu a "Chinese Social Darwinist," since Yan never committed himself to Social Darwinism, nor did he simply defend Spencer against Huxley's attack. He did not approved of Spencerian's "fanatical individualism," nor did he agree completely with Spencer's position "no action against nature." He was in favour of Huxley's "horticultural process" and applauded Huxley's proto-Kropotkinist bent and idea of "ethical process" all which ran counter to the Spencerian "gladiatorial theory of existence." See *China and Charles Darwin* (1983), 158-162, 169-175.

¹³⁰ Yan Fu, *Tianyan lun*, zixu [Translator's preface to *Tianyan lun*], cited in Li Zehou, p. 265.

combating it.”¹³¹ That was presumably one of the most important reasons for Yan making his decision to translate Huxley.¹³²

Yan Fu appreciated Huxley's notion of “human action” (人治 *renzhi*), the analogy of “horticultural interference,” and the idea of “ethical process.” However, at the same time, because of the intimate tie with the traditional Chinese thought which was marked by the view of the harmony of the universe with man and of the cosmic roots of human morality, he found it very hard to accept Huxley's hostility towards the cosmos. Yan Fu believed everything including man's “innate conscience” (天良 *tianliang*) to be a product of the evolutionary process; therefore, he held a naturalistic approach to the fundamental concept of human nature, which led him to oppose Huxley's position that human morality derived from “conscience” and “feelings of mutual sympathy.”¹³³ Yan Fu was a disciple neither of Spencer, nor of Huxley, but, driven by his overwhelming concern for China's wealth and power, creatively synthesised Huxley and Spencer through his integration of Xunzi, Confucianism, and Taoism, and indeterminism and determinism.¹³⁴ Therefore, if we want to describe what Yan Fu introduced into China, Western nineteenth-century evolutionism might be a suggestion, since, as a matter of fact, it is a mixture rather than simply the theory or teaching of one individual.

In Hunan, the centre of the political reform storm after 1895, the intellectual ferment, which supplied the driving force of the reform movement, was fuelled not only by Kang Youwei's reformism but also by the nineteenth-century Western theory of evolution imported by Yan Fu. The influence can be easily discerned in the writings and essays of such radical reformers as Tan Sitong, Tang Caichang, Yi Nai, Bi Yongnian and Pi Jiayou published in *Xiangxue xinbao* and *Xiang Bao*, two major journals of the Hunan reformers. The pressing problem that China was facing was

¹³¹ Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics, and other essays* (New York, 1925) p. 81. Yan Fu stated that “today, one can not achieve the Way without a struggle with the natural process. It would not work to follow the natural process, nor to escape from it. ... The reason why European countries achieved wealth and power and took the superior position over the last hundred years derived from nothing but their control of the natural process through human effort.” See Yan Fu, “Jinhua” [Evolution] in *Tianyan lun* pt. II, cited in Jiang Weiqiao, pp. 138-9.

¹³² Li Zehou, “Lun Yan Fu,” p. 265.

¹³³ For an understanding of Huxley's view of ethics see Julian Huxley's “Introduction” to *Evolution and Ethics*, (London, 1947) pp. 1-3. For Yan Fu's criticism of Huxley see Schwartz, p. 107-8, Pusey, p. 161-2. See also Li Zehou, “Lun Yan Fu” p. 262.

considered then as part of the framework of evolutionary theory. The survival of China depended on whether China could adopt herself soon and well to fit the contending situation. For Yi Nai, the fittest was not the strongest, but the most adaptable. The programme for China's self-adaptation he suggested was "complete Westernization," which was far more radical than any comparable programme of the twentieth century.¹³⁵ Of course, Yi Nai was not the only one who talked of China's survival and "struggle for the existence" on an ethnic level, for, after Yan Fu touched on the topic in his essay "On strength," Liang Qichao, Tang Caichang and Tan Sitong all paid attention in varying degree and in their own ways to the question of racial strengthening as a necessity for future survival.

Apart from this, the affirmation of the value of "struggle" characterised another aspect of the Hunanese perception of Western evolutionary theory. The concept of "struggle" (or contention) was introduced by Yan Fu. The Chinese idiom he created, *wujing tianze* (物竞天择 [living] things contend and Heaven, or nature, chooses), encapsulated Darwinian ideas of the "struggle for existence" and "natural selection." According to Yan Fu, "'Things contend' means that [living] things struggle for self-preservation. 'Heaven chooses' means that only the fit species are preserved."¹³⁶ The former part indicated the brutal historical facts and harsh reality and the latter its corollary result. In the essay "Yuan qiang" (Whence the strength?) Yan sketched a brief picture of the struggles between species and groups during the long process of evolution which had been marked by the fact that "the weak invariably become the prey of the strong; the stupid invariably become subservient to the clever."¹³⁷ Yan Fu was not depressed by the image of "nature red in tooth and claw," he had simply accepted it as the general principle which was irresistible, and of universal validity. The more important message he drew out from Spencer was the value of struggle. He was convinced by Spencer that struggle and contention were the driving forces of progress and evolution.

¹³⁴ Guo Zhengzhao, 681-686. Pusey, p. 345.

¹³⁵ Yi Nai's proposal for "complete Westernization" included not only adopting the Western calendar and institutions, but also its religions. Furthermore, it encouraged the improvement of the Chinese race through foreign marriage. See his essay "Zhongguo yi yiruo weiqiang shuo" in *Xiang Bao leizuan* [The classified Xiang Daily], p. 19. This is discussed in Pusey, p. 145, 148.

¹³⁶ Yan Fu, "Yuan Qiang" (Whence the strength?) p. 41. The English translation is adopted from Pusey with slight modification. See Pusey, p. 61.

¹³⁷ Ibid. For English translation see Schwartz, (1964) p. 45.

Thus, the concept of the struggle for existence was conceived by Yan Fu, Liang Qichao and other reform-minded gentry-literati not only as a descriptive term of reality, but also as a value concept. To affirm the value of struggle and conflict naturally went counter to the traditional Chinese thought that preached peace and harmony as the ultimate value for both means and end. For these reformers, the concept of struggle meant self-strengthening at two levels: nation-state and individuals.¹³⁸ On the one hand, it emphasised the groupism and solidarity required for China's survival in the state of contention that existed among the world's nation-states. On the other hand, it encouraged individuals' self-endeavour and self-development, since Yan was profoundly convinced by Spencer's view that social integration was grounded on the quality and strength of the individuals which referred to a unity of physical, intellectual, and moral energies which was latent within every individual. These energies, furthermore, were driven by the enlightened sense of self-interest within the individual. Yan Fu advocated emphatically the spirit of self-assertion, the pursuit of enlightened self-interest and the liberty of the individual rather than Huxley's social ethics of "self-restraint" (克己 *keji*), because he worried that "talking too much of self-restraint would stifle self-development (自营 *ziying*)."¹³⁹

The view that struggle was the only path to survival found enormous echoes, especially in Hunan, where it gained an overwhelming consensus among the reform-minded Hunanese gentry-literati. However, for Hunanese radical reformers such as Tang Caichang and Bi Yongnian, the implication of fighting and violence was read into the concept of struggle. As Pusey puts it, the view that one must fight for peace, kill to end killing and that "the starting point towards no struggle is the struggle for survival" was a message derived from the notion of struggle for existence.¹⁴⁰ It

¹³⁸ Schwartz maintained that Yan Fu's vision of struggle was derived from Spencerian Social Darwinism that referred to struggle of whole societies for existence, and the struggle of individuals among themselves within society. His personal experience of the economic prosperity and social stability of Victorian Britain provided him with more direct evidence than others among his Chinese contemporaries to be convinced by Spencer that Britain's ascendancy resulted from the fruitful struggle among the individuals which facilitated in releasing the energies latent in individuals. Schwartz, (1964), p. 80.

¹³⁹ Schwartz, (1964), 55-64. Liang Qichao, "Yu Yan Youling shu" (letter to Yan Fu), *Yinbingshi wenji*, vol. 1, p. 101.

¹⁴⁰ Pusey, p. 143.

heralded the ideology of the later revolutionaries. Yang Yulin, who was in charge of the “current affairs” section at the editorial board of *Xiangxue xinbao* at that time, was deeply affected by this vision of “struggle.” Thus, it is not surprising that he turned himself quickly into a revolutionary in favour of violent means, particularly, assassination.

To emphasis the struggle for existence also implies an exaltation of indeterminism and voluntarism which is not lacking in traditional Chinese thought, but now Huxley's notion of “human action” (人为 *renwei*) and “horticulture” lent new theoretical support. Therefore, what Yan Fu really wanted was to let his fellow men pay attention to self-strengthening (自强 *zhiqiang*), self-reliance (自力 *zili*), individual independence (自立 *zili*) and self-mastering (自主 *zizhu*, or autonomy), etc., in short, in order to awaken the sense of self-strengthening among the Chinese people and thus survive in the tooth-and-claw competition of the imperialist era. It is said to be the underlying theme of Yan's thought.¹⁴¹ As we have shown in the quotation above, Yang called out “not being the slave of ‘natural process’ (天行 *tianxing*).” The self-strengthening of the individual remained at the centre of his concerns.

It appears that Yang did not intend to let himself become involved in the discourses of survival from the ethnic point of view, even though the preservation of the state and of the race were at the centre of his concerns. Nor was he affected by the implication of violent struggle. It is by no means clear that he rejected the value of struggle. His perception of the concept of struggle is reflected clearly in his pronunciation of “not being the slave of ‘natural process (天行 *tianxing*).” The theme of indeterminism seems totally uninterrupted in Yang's thought. Both themes: determinism (when he talked of *yunhui* (运会 destiny)) and indeterminism, can be discerned clearly in the works of Yan Fu. It was the individualism of Social Darwinism and the Spencerian theory of social organism concerning the relationships between individuals and those between an individual and society that first captured Yang's attention. It should be understood that his Confucian

¹⁴¹ Li Zehuo, “Lun Yan Fu,” pp. 266-7

humanitarian concerns, as we noted in chapter 2, remained at the centre of Yang's thought.

There were human beings, and then there was the world. Every individual possesses the sense of self-interest (利己之心 *lijì zhī xīn*) that existed prior to the world taking shape. As for religion, scholarship, society and the nation-state, when we consider their origins, observe their complement, and trace back to the cause of their change and evolution, all originated from man's sense of the pursuit of self-interest (人类利己之心 *renlèi lìjì zhī yixin*). Because of self-interest (利己 *lijì*), there must be competition and struggle [between men]. The fiercer the competition and struggle is, the quicker the process of evolution. Because of egoism, there is an exclusionism (排外主义 *páiwài zhuyì*), because of exclusionism men have to make efforts to group together. For the sake of the self, one has to resort to others' help. To gain others' help, one has to offer his help to others. Had not so-called morality actually originated from the sense of self-interest (or egoism)?¹⁴²

There are several points worth noting here. First of all, Yang's recognition that everyone possessed the "sense of self-interest," implies that he regarded it as, at least, one component of human nature. This view runs counter to the orthodox Mencian-Confucian doctrine of human nature. Of course, there is an indigenous source, but in this context, the influence of the Western evolutionary view of history seems more decisive. Yang then attributed human sociability or the willingness and capacity to group together, as well as the origins of society, to the reciprocation motivated by man's self-interest, and not by altruism. It means that one acts in favour of another out of an instinct for self-preservation. In other words, the real motivation behind altruistic behaviour was self-interest.

Such a view derived neither from Darwin, nor from Huxley. Darwin maintained that man's sociability derived from "social instinct" and referred mainly to mutual love, sympathy and conscience. Huxley recognised that those who co-operated willingly had a great advantage in the struggle for existence, but the reason for the rise of human society, believed Huxley, was because of "sympathetic emotions" not because of struggles driven by the individual's "sense of self-interest." He warned that unlimited self-assertion would destroy society. Furthermore, for Huxley, human "conscience" and moral sentiment were inherent, intuitive and *a priori*. The reason for the emergence of law and morals was to restrain the "fanatical individualism in

¹⁴² Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu fanlun," p. 868.

the struggle for existence between men in society” and to “suppress the qualities best fitted for success in that struggle.” That is why he discredited Spencer’s application of cosmic principles to human society. That is why he held firmly that the essence of the ethical process and the essential condition of the existence of every polity was “self-restraint,” and not “fanatical individualism.” Therefore, both men regarded “social instinct” as the origin of moral sense. Based firmly on a scientific foundation, morality was now not only possible but also the necessary basis for a healthy human society.¹⁴³

Having attributed the human quality of sociability to the “sense of self-interest” Yang came to elevate this sense. Here we find that the “sense of self-interest” was considered to be the source of religion and scholarship, the embodiment of human spiritual and intellectual achievements, and as the fountainhead of the evolution of human history and civilization. Yang’s idea of “individual rights” was thus furnished with evolutionistic approval.

This view bears clearly the imprint of naturalistic ethics and “fanatical individualism” of Social Darwinism of the Spencerian kind. Yan Fu’s inclination may have influenced Yang considerably.¹⁴⁴ To accept naturalistic ethics and to assert the value of enlightened self-interest (合理的利己之心 *heli de lijì zhì xīn*) from the point of view of social evolutionism indicates a departure from the Mencian-Confucian view of human nature. However, it needs to be noted that the departure was temporary, because Yang amended this view later. He no longer insisted that the “sense of self-interest” was the origin of morality. On the contrary, he took Huxley’s position. The U-turn of his attitude can be found in his writings after 1914 when he returned to China from his studies in Scotland and Germany.

Existence leads to struggle. The struggle for existence means living beings exclude each other (sometimes they did this unconsciously) [in the struggle] for self-preservation and self-development. In this regard power (*jì lì* or strength, mighty) has the absolute value. It brought about the tragedy of the superiority of the winner and the inferiority of the loser, and eventually led to the brutal fact of the strong eating the weak. In the course of evolution, only the strong can survive; the weak

¹⁴³ For the idea of “social instinct” see Darwin’s “The descent of man” (1871) cited in Peter Singer, *Ethics*, (Oxford, 1994) pp. 43-8, and Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics*, p. 51, 53-4.

¹⁴⁴ For Yan Fu’s perception of enlightened self-interest see page 21 of this chapter.

inevitably degenerates into extinction. Hence, we cannot say that morality originated from the struggle for existence; the rise of morals and laws are simply due to a willingness to save human beings from suffering the tragedies of that struggle. The ideas of justice, sincerity, benevolence and all the obligations of regard for others (对他之本务 *duita zhi benwu*, such as helping others), of which we are speaking, exist for no other reason than to prevent the occurrence of chaos due to the struggle for existence. It would be a great disgrace for human beings to live under the principle of a struggle for existence.¹⁴⁵

Yang's conviction to evolutionarism may also have been influenced by the image envisaged by Spencerian evolutionism of the development of human history as an evolutionary process directed towards a better future. That is reflected clearly at the end of the article where he wrote optimistically, "The world means an evolutionary [process] of advance. Religion, scholarship, society and state, all follow the axiom of evolution and are marching on in an endless journey. The present world has evolved from the ancient world, and the future will evolve from the present. Because the present is better than the past, the future should be better than the present." That is why he claimed that "the fiercer the competition and struggle is, the quicker the process of evolution."¹⁴⁶

Yang might not have approved of all of Spencer's views, but at this point he believed firmly that evolution was equal to progress. The view of evolution proceeding toward a better future may have facilitated Yang's affirmation of the value of a "sense of self-interest," since he regarded this as the fountainhead of the evolution of the human world. However, one thing that is certain is that Yang was fully convinced by the historical view of lineage development under the influence of Western evolutionism. It provided further theoretical support to Yang to believe that change and reform would be a necessary step that would lead towards a better future. More important is that it enabled Yang to repudiate the ineradicable traditional approach of sticking to past practices (法古 *fagu*, or following the models of ancient times) which Yang condemned as "an utterly absurd idea, being ridiculous enough to bring about the calamity of race extinction." On this ground Yang had formed one of what he called two cardinal notions: comprehension of the present (通今 *tongjin*), the other

¹⁴⁵ Yang Changji, "Gezhong lunlizhuyi lueshu ji gaipin," *Wenji*, p. 266.

¹⁴⁶ Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu fanlun" [A general discussion on education], in *Youxueyibian* [Study abroad and Translation], 9(1903): 869.

being “valuing the self” (贵我 *guiwo*). These two essential ideas became the core of Yang's philosophy.

In the West, the rise of individualism is often recognised as marking the opposition of modern society to traditional societies.¹⁴⁷ But in Yang there is no such sense. On the one hand, he emphasised overwhelmingly individualistic values, on the other hand, he maintained the dependent relationship of the individual or self to society as a whole, that is, man as a social being. The coexistence of individualistic and holistic lines marks another distinctive aspect of Yang's view of the individual and society. His holistic view is perhaps nowhere more clearly expressed than in the following passage:

Once man is born, he lives in a certain family, thus he has relations with the family; he also lives in a certain state, he thus has relations with the state. [At the same time], he also lives in a certain society, thus he has social relationships. Moreover, these various relationships exist in conjunction with each other at the same time. People live in the network of familial, national and social relationships all the time. Living and surviving together they interrelate and affect each other ... working together and acting in concert in order to make things easier. Even a small product has been done through the efforts and hands of hundreds and thousands of people.¹⁴⁸

Obviously the passage suggests that Yang saw the self, a person or an individual primarily as a social being or as a so-called “relational being” Traditionally, Confucians never thought of an individual as an isolated being. “He was his father's son and his son's father, his elder brother's junior, and the younger brother of his elder brother.” In short, each individual was conceived of primarily as an “integral member of his family.”¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, this pattern of relationships was extended into the state and society and was regarded as the basic standard of the Chinese social order. The relationship between the emperor and his ministers, or between his subjects, the relationships between a teacher and his students, the relationship between friends, the relationships between males and females all were developed

¹⁴⁷ Louis Dumont, *Essays on Individualism: Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986, p. 60.

¹⁴⁸ Yang Changji, “Jiaoyu fanlun,” *Youxueyibian*, p.865.

¹⁴⁹ John C.H. Wu, “The status of the individual in the political and legal traditions of old and new China,” in *Chinese Mind*, p. 346.

from the formula of the familial relationships prescribed by Confucianism.¹⁵⁰ Of course, Confucians were not alone in seeing the individual as a social being, Plato and Aristotle both recognised that man is essentially a social being.¹⁵¹ But, no other system of thought in the world is as meticulous as Confucianism in emphasising human relationships. The concept of the web of relationships dominated the Confucian view of the self, the person and the individual.

It is a basic fact that the individual has to be socially and structurally located in the family, the primary social reality, once he has been born. Yang was keenly aware that no human being is born, grows up and maintains life completely disassociated from his familial and social context. The shaping of such view can be traced back as early as 1894 when he wrote in his diary:

Having contemplated it I have come to realise that we have benefited greatly from the products provided by society. We must know that a house is a fruit of the hard labour of many builders and the effort of the management of a master. An instrument and an implement are the result of much effort by our predecessors and also reflect the difficulties of selling goods. A garment contains lots of work of spinning, twisting, and tailoring; foods go through the stages of tillage and cooking. Knowledge requires the teaching accumulated by hundreds and thousands of sages and worthies through generations and the help provided by father and brother, teachers and friends.¹⁵²

The inspiration for this passage may have come from his reading of Mencius's idea that "in the case of any single individual [whatever articles he can require] are ready to his hand, being produced by various handicraftsmen."¹⁵³ The passage in *Mencius* refers to a debate over the propriety of the social division of labour. Having refuted Xu Xing (许行) 's argument that a ruler ought to labour at farming with his own hands, Mencius proclaimed his idea of social hierarchy.¹⁵⁴ Yang derived a different interpretation from it and concluded:

If there is no society and no state there will be no family and no individuals. If one wants to establish oneself, one has to comprehend the

¹⁵⁰ Jin Yaoji, "Rujia xueshu zhong de geti yu qunti: yide guanxi jiaotu de quanshi" [The individual and the group in Confucianism] in his *Zhongguo shehui yu wenhua*, [Chinese society and culture], (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1993) p. 2

¹⁵¹ Lewis Dumont, p. 28.

¹⁵² Yang Changji, "Diary (1894)," *Wenji*, p. 10.

¹⁵³ *Mencius*, 3A.4/6. For the translation see Legge, p. 249.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. And Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo zhixueshi*, [A History of Chinese philosophy] (Hong Kong, 1961), Bk. 1, p. 147.

great tendency of the present world, ... and fulfil one's social obligations (公众义务 *gongzhong yiwu*).¹⁵⁵

Apparently Yang regarded society and state as the precondition of existence for both family and the individual and emphasised the individual's public duties. Unlike Spencer who mitigated the tension between his methodological individualism and holistic social organism through emphasising, that "Society exists for the benefit of its members; not its members for the benefit of society," Yang did not allow himself to dwell on the question.¹⁵⁶ Instead, he frankly pointed out the necessity of the individual's duties to society, since the individual rights included duties as well. Thus, emphasising the individual's fulfilment of his public duties, which might require the individual to sacrifice his interest for the collective interest if necessary, seemed not to be at odds with his ardent advocacy of individualism. In his late years, Yang distinguished the individual's interest from the individual's "-ism" - faith. In his view, an individual could give up his personal interest, but never yield an "-ism" to which he was committed. Spencer's social organism did influence Yang, but not the aspect of his view of society. Yang's view of society was in line with the Confucian tradition in which "society" was defined as the web or the totality of various social relationships. The clear expression of social organism did not appear until 1914 when he discussed China's perception of Western culture and the relationship between spiritual and material civilization.

The idea of the individual as the basic element which constituted a foundation of society and the state, seems to have enabled Yang to surpass the inner conflicts and tensions between the ideals of individuals and the orientation of social and relational values within the Confucian tradition. At this moment, though he admitted the social and relational nature of man and self, he seemed determined to embrace the ultimate value of the self as the agent of the self-conscious subject, and of the individual as the basic element of the society as a whole. He believed that the authentic realisation an individual's self-independence was the guarantee of the "collective rights" of the whole. As we mentioned above, there are rich sources of individualistic concepts, such as equality, human dignity and deep respect for the independent individuals

¹⁵⁵ Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu fanlun" p. 865

¹⁵⁶ Spencer, *Principle of Sociology*, II § 212, cited in Peel, p. 187.

within the Confucian heritage, upon which Yang's view of individualism drew to a large extent.

To sum up, Yang's concept of "individual rights" that was formed during this period is not only a political one but is closely linked to a cluster of philosophical ideas about the identity of the human being, the fundamental issue of "heavenly principle and human desire," the individual's autonomy, (the cardinal value of modern Western liberalism) the relationship of part-whole, (balance between individualism and holism) and the evolutionary outlook of historical development.

It is not deniable that selfhood, and its relation to society, had long been a central concern to Confucianism and there are rich sources of "individualistic" tradition of Confucian thought on which Yang drew extensively. However, Western notions such as "rights" and "autonomy" also played a decisive role, to the extent that his version of "individual rights" is very close to the ethos of Western individualism or more precisely, liberal individualism. It is unmistakable that the ethos of liberty figured large in Yang's claim of individual's right in terms of freedom of thought and speech, but the difference is distinctive. In the West the concept of liberalism was very much concerned with defending the individual's rights against, among other things, the authority and control of the State and the claims of society as a whole.¹⁵⁷ But, for Yang, the individual's autonomy was perceived primarily in spiritual, intellectual and ethical aspects. This formed the foundation for the political aspect of Yang's concept of individual's autonomy, that is, the demand for the individual's rights. It marks boldly one aspect of Yang's version of individual rights. To view the individual as a social being prevented him from embracing completely a Kantian "autonomy" in the sense of regarding the person as the end (not the means). For him both self-realisation and the ideal society is the end, they are one unity with two inseparable aspects. On the one hand, an individual's self-realisation must be achieved within society, otherwise fulfilling one's social responsibility for self-realisation is impossible; on the other hand, realisation of an ideal society depends on the quality of each individual member of society, self-realisation is the only way toward the ideal society. Such a view remained within the framework of the

¹⁵⁷ D.D. Raphael, *Moral Philosophy* (1989), P. 68.

Confucian ideal of sage-statesmanship. However, the value of an individual was boldly emphasised in Yang's formulation.

Yang was not the first or the only one of his time to use the concept of *quanli*, (权利 rights)¹⁵⁸ but he was one of the first group of Chinese intellectuals at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century to link the concept of the rights with the individual and to place overwhelming weight on "autonomy." Unlike Liu Shipei, whose conception of rights was radical and whose emphasis on equality resulted in his commitment to a theory of revolution and anarchism, the demand for equality was not one of Yang's central concerns.¹⁵⁹ Instead, the independence of the individual, particularly in the sense of freedom of thought, is writ large in Yang's liberal thought. Western evolutionary theory, Spencerian social organism and liberalism were undoubtedly major sources of inspiration for a reappraisal of certain fundamental ideas such as the self, the individual, human nature and the relationship between the individual and society. However Yang's perception of individual rights is entwined with the indigent idea of Confucian moral autonomy. It should be noted that, more than a decade later, such liberal individualism became the mainstream of thought during the period of the so-called Chinese Renaissance or Enlightenment (1915-1927, starting with the New-culture movement (from 1915 onwards) which joined together with the New Literature movement (from 1917 onwards) during the May Fourth period. So it is no wonder that from his emphasis on individual autonomy Yang developed during this period two distinctive but interrelated cardinal notions: "valuing the self" () and "comprehension of the present reality," () to which he committed himself for the rest of his life.

¹⁵⁸ The notion of "rights" may have been introduced by Western missionaries as early as the 1870s and certainly by the 1880s. Liu Guangjing, "Wan Qing renquanlun chutan: jianlun jidujiao sixiang zhi yingxiang" (A preliminary study of the discussion of Human rights in the Late Qing: with comments on the influence of Christian thought), *Xinshi xue* [New history] 5:3 (Sept. 1994) pp. 5-6, cited in Peter Zarrow "Citizenship and Human rights in Twentieth-Century Chinese thought: Liu Shipei and Liang Qichao," *Confucianism and Human Rights*, p. 210.

¹⁵⁹ For Liu Shipei and Liang Qichao's discussion of rights, see Peter Zarrow's "Citizenship and human rights in early twentieth-century Chinese thought," pp. 209-233.

Yang's reform programme

Yang's concrete reform programme is mainly presented in his essay entitled "Lun Hunan zunzhi sheli shangwu ju yi xian zhenxing nonggong zhi xue" (On how Hunan should take precedence in the promotion of studies concerning agriculture and industry over the establishment of a Commercial Bureau under the imperial edict). The essay was written for a competition organised to encourage gentry-literati to provide their ideas for the solution of pressing problems. Organized by the Southern Study Society it took place on 26 June 1898. Yang chose one of six assigned topics and won third place. His essay was published on 13th September 1898 in the daily newspaper *Xiang bao*.¹⁶⁰ Although the topics were prescribed, Yang's choice demonstrated clearly which issues most concerned him and which matters he considered were the most fundamental for China's reform.

At the outset of the essay he discussed the inefficiency of reform activities since 1895. "After the Sino-Japanese war, the accumulated weakness of China became known to everyone. Thus, regarding reform as the only way of self-strengthening became the general consensus of the emperor and officials above in the court and the grassroots below. Over the last two to three years, there have been many new policies issued and various examples of new learning have emerged in the capital and provinces. But why have things been done inefficiently, and why has all the effort failed to achieve significant results?"¹⁶¹ Yang attributed the problem to a "lack of financial foundation." Money seemed to be the key for carrying out the reform plan for China's prosperity and strength.

Yang suggested a mercantilist policy, conferring primacy on the promotion of "commercial affairs" (商务 *shangwu*) over others. In the late Qing, Chinese traditional economic thought experienced a transition from "disparaging commerce" (轻商 *qingshang*) to recognition of the importance of the promotion of commercial affairs. An appeal for the promotion of commercial affairs can be found in the writings of several pioneering reform-minded scholar-officials, such as Zheng Guanying, Ma Jianzhong, Chen Zhi, and Xue Fucheng. More importantly it gained

¹⁶⁰ *Xiang bao* [Hunan's daily], Sunday, 26th June 1898, Tuesday, 13th Sept. 1898, (reprinted by Zhonghua shuju, 1965), p. 868, 1495-1497.

¹⁶¹ Yang Changji, "Zhenxing nonggong zhi xue" (1898), *Wenji*, p.16.

support from influential high ranking officials such as Li Hongzhang.¹⁶² As A. Feuerwerker points out, “the economy of late-Ch’ing China was characterised by a high degree of commercial development.”¹⁶³ The transformation of traditional attitudes towards “commercial affairs” was based on a substantial change on the essential view of the foundations of a state, that is, that “commercial affairs” came to be seen as the foundations on which a state should be established. Another important component of the mercantilist trend was encapsulated in the phrase *shangzhan* (商战 lit. “Commercial warfare”). The emergence of Chinese mercantilism was tied up closely with the intrusion of Western power. One of the main stimuli in the opening up China was the extension of Western commerce. Having seen this aspect of the character of the Chinese and Western conflict, the Chinese reformers who were in favour of the priority of promotion of commerce saw China’s struggle for survival as a sort of commercial competition between China and Western states. As Yang Changji summed up in his essay, “the foundation on which Western states are established is their highly developed commerce. They also try to control China through their supremacy of commerce. Therefore, if we do not promote commerce, how can our nation stand up among the other wealthy and powerful nations in the world.”¹⁶⁴ In Hunan the phrase “To enhance the strength of commerce rather than weapons” (兵战不如商战 *bingzhan buru shangzhan*) became all pervasive.¹⁶⁵

While Yang accepted a popular view that the wealth and power of Western countries mainly lay on their highly developed commerce, he emphasised that land and its products were the only true source of wealth, thus, the agriculture and handicraft were the foundation of other learning. “Although”, he asserted, “the promotion of commerce is a pressing task, we should bear in mind that the origin or foundation (本原 *benyuan*) of commerce lies in the study and learning of agriculture and handicraft/industry (农工之学 *nonggong zhi xue*).” No doubt, there is a strong smack

¹⁶² For the transition from “disparaging commerce” to the emphasis on commerce in order to achieve the prosperity and strength of China, see Wu Zhangquan, “Yangwu yundong zhong de shangwu sixiang” [The trend towards promoting commercial affairs in the Foreign Affairs Movement] in *Jindai Zhongguo sixiang renwu lun* [Collected essays on modern Chinese thought and prominent figures], (1981) pp. 299-306. See also Wellington K.K. Chan, “Government, merchants and industry to 1911” in the *Cambridge History of China, the late Ch’ing*, vol. 11, pp. 416-8.

¹⁶³ Albert Feuerwerker, “Economic trends in the late Ch’ing empire, 1870-1911” in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 11, *The late Ch’ing*, pp. 40-60.

¹⁶⁴ Yang Changji, “Zhenxing nonggong zhi xue”(1898), *Wenji*, p.16.

of traditional view of Chinese physiocracy in Yang's position. But the differences are also easily discerned. Firstly, *工* *gong* or "handicraft and industry", which used to be ranked as low as commerce, was elevated to a position as important as agriculture. Furthermore, Yang's view of the secondary importance of commerce was not derived from the traditional passive stance toward commerce and merchant, according to which commerce was considered as speculation designed merely for profit making and merchants were regarded as people of dishonest character who reaped staggering profit. Yang's argument for the primacy of agricultural and industrial development was linked to his view on the root economic cause of China's poverty. He stated, "the farmer is one who produces corps and grains; the worker (or handcrafter) is one who makes products; the merchant is one who buys and sells commodities, and all people under Heaven are consumers of goods produced by farmer and workers. Once we have compared the figures of product makers with consumers, the gap between the two groups is too obvious to require further statistics. There are fewer producers than consumers, that is why people have suffered a lack of food and articles for daily use, and the country has fallen into poverty."¹⁶⁶

The idea doubtless originated from the *Great Learning*, which contains the sentences, "There is a great principle for the production of wealth. Let the producers be many and the consumers few. Let there be activity in the production, and economy in the expenditure. Then the wealth will always be sufficient."¹⁶⁷ He regarded this "great principle" as the "essence of economics" (生计学之精义 *shengji xue zhi jingyi*), and formed the cornerstone of his economic thought. Although too simple and superficial to explain the complexity of modern economic life, Yang remained committed to it throughout the rest of his life. In an essay entitled "Zhisheng pian" (On the production of wealth) published in *New Youth* in 1916 he cited it again to elaborate his idea of the way to produce wealth not from the point of view of government, but from society.¹⁶⁸ Apart from the small number of people

¹⁶⁵ *Xiang bao* [Hunan's daily] 23 April 1898, (1965) p. 336.

¹⁶⁶ Yang Changji, "Zhenxing nonggong zhi xue"(1898), *Wenji*, p.16.

¹⁶⁷ *The Great Learning*, chapter 10, sec. 19. See Legge's translation, p. 379.

¹⁶⁸ Yang Changji, "Zhisheng pian" [On production of wealth], *New Youth*, 2:4 (1916) and 2:5 (1917). See *Wenji*, p. 229.

engaged in production, the intrusion of foreign goods in Chinese markets was considered by Yang as another reason for the underdevelopment of national economy. Finally, Yang criticised the government for the failure to exploiting fully China's natural resources.

Therefore, in Yang's reform programme, the promotion of agriculture and industry rather than the setting up of a Commercial Affairs Bureau was fundamental. But this is not all, for Yang thought that without knowledge and qualified people with the relevant knowledge and skills, the development of agriculture and industry was impossible. Hence, "studies and learning of agriculture and industry" (农工之学 *nonggong zhi xue*) were regarded as the foundation of the reform programme.

Three methods were suggested by Yang for carrying out his reform programme. Among them the "study society" (学会 *xuehui*) was of the greatest importance. From the point of view of structure, function and the tasks, the study society for the promotion of agriculture and industry suggested by Yang was very close to the model of Nan xuehui (Southern study society). In Yang's plan, the formation of the "study society" depended primarily on a small elite getting together to take up the matter of organisation. They were not only to be men who had a thorough understanding of the times, a strong civil spirit and a willingness to take responsibility, but also men who were "rich in property" (富有田产 *fuyou tianchan*). That wealth was considered as a premise of being a qualified leader seems novel. It may have been influenced by an ancient dictum of Mencius that "Those with constant livelihood (恒产 *hengchan*) will have constant heart (恒心 *hengxin*), while those without livelihood will not have constant heart. Lacking constant heart they will go astray and get into excesses, stopping at nothing."¹⁶⁹ Thus, to a certain degree, financial independence was very important for man's persevering and devoting himself to doing things. The implication may be that the man who could not live on his own feet would not be able to act independently and determinedly. How could such a person become a leader capable of carrying out great tasks? The idea

¹⁶⁹ Mencius, 3A: 3, translated in D. C. Lau, p. 97, with slight modification.

that man's real socio-political independence was conditioned by financial self-reliance can also be found in his later writings.¹⁷⁰

The “study society” was assigned three main tasks: investigation (考察 *kaocha*), communication and organisation (联络 *lianluo*), and education and transformation (化导 *huadao*). Investigation included examining how many people were engaged in farming and handicraft, its associations and funds, resources and technology, costs and marketing of products and finally water irrigation works. It served the purpose of ascertaining the direction of the promotion of agriculture and industry. The second task aimed at the mobilisation of both gentry-literati and the common farmers and workers setting up communications among both groups. The mobilisation of gentry-literati was considered as the keystone, since farmers and worker needed able men to lead and guide them. It is interesting to note that Yang emphasised that the setting up of contacts should begin within the clan. This view shows that, for Yang, the clan remained the basis for modern organisations. Aside from the promotion of a private village school for the children of farmers and craftsmen, the publishing of newspapers and journals, making regulations for approaches between farmers and farmers, workers and workers, and farmers and workers became another important matter in the task of education and transformation. While the “study society” was regarded as having the key role, establishing a special training school was seen as a necessary “supplementary method.” The subjects of modern science relevant to agriculture and industry would be taught and a modern chemical laboratory set up. “School will issue certificates to graduates and send them to teach in other places, and if we,” Yang believed, “persist in this, the new trends will soon prevail.”¹⁷¹ Therefore, China's rejuvenation depended on the development of agriculture and industry and the development of agriculture and industry depended on the promotion of study and education. The idea is actually a demonstration of one aspect of Yang's idea of *xuewen*, (学问) scholarship and knowledge as the foundation of a nation-state and education (教 *jiao*) as the foundation of politics (政 *zheng*).

¹⁷⁰ See Yang's “Zhisheng pian” [On the production of wealth] and “Jiaoyuxue jiangyi” [Lecture notes on education].

¹⁷¹ Yang Changji, “Zhenxing nonggong zhi xue”(1898), *Wenji*, pp. 19-20.

The whole reform programme demonstrated Yang's overwhelming concern with "change and development from below." Like Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao and the majority of his reform-minded contemporaries, Yang attached extreme importance to education and the leading role of the *junzi*, yet Yang never thought that a political approach to solving the socio-political problems of China was the best way; that might be why we cannot find a single word referring to parliament in his writings during the period from 1895 to 1903. Instead, he committed himself to an educational-intellectualistic approach, while Kang, Liang, and many radical reformist colleagues of his time concerned themselves also with a political approach. That made Yang's ideas distinct from the theories of other reformers. Yang's reform programme owed a great deal to his reformist thought or his reflections on China's reform movement; further exploration of this point is now required.

"Reform from bottom" and its philosophical basis

"After the conclusion of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (17 April 1895)," Yang Changji wrote later, "the people of our country came to realise that China's survival depended on reform."¹⁷² In fact, the passage also depicts vividly the development of Yang's thought. As we showed above, Yang was a vehement critic of traditional monarchy and despotism, an ardent proponent of reform, and was actively involved in the reform movement in Hunan. However, despite his radical intellectual attitude, Yang, like Yan Fu, was in favour of political gradualism and a moderate way of reform. He asserted,

There are two ways to deal with political institutional change (法制变 *fazhi bian*): change from above and change from below. Change from above can produce quick results, but is not steady; change from below can last a long time though it will bring about results less speedily than change from above. Now although there are some small changes from above, we cannot depend on them alone.¹⁷³

It is clear that Yang was in favour of "changes from below." One of the reasons for this is clearly his consideration of a long-term interest of reform. Change from above might bring about quick success and instant benefit, but it was not reliable, just like a tree without root and water without a source. Apparently, for Yang, "below" was the

¹⁷² Yang Changji, "Daohai Lieshi Yangjun Shouren Shilue" [A brief biography of the martyr Yang Shouren]. The article was written in 1911 and reprinted in *Yang Changji wenji*, pp29-31.

¹⁷³ Yang Changji, "Dahua zhai riji" (1903), *Wenji*, p. 28.

basis or roots of “above,” implying that “below” determined “above.” Only proceeding with reform from below could bring about authentic, reliable and long-lasting results. Only reform of the foundation could get at the root of the problem, Yang believed. That reveals clearly one of the most significant characteristics of Yang's way of thinking, that is, an inclination to explore what is of basic importance and a seeking for a radical solution to the problem (求本原 *qiu benyuan*).¹⁷⁴

Kang Youwei's proposal for cultural-educational renovations included the following main points: firstly, in order to counter the increasing incursion of foreign faiths he called for the establishment of Confucianism as a national religion and the institutionalisation of a Confucian church, which was backed by Kang's idea of the “preservation of faith” (保教 *baojiao*); secondly, introducing new ideas through the large-scale translation of Japanese and Western books; thirdly, educational institutional reform, namely, the reform of the curriculum, the abolition of the civil service examination system and the establishment of a modern national school system in order to meet the needs of China's political modernisation; and, finally, the establishment of study societies and newspapers in order to enlighten and mobilise the gentry-literati class. These local and social elite had been the backbone of the social stability of imperial China and would be the leading force in political and institutional reforms. Furthermore, gentry-literati were seen as the key to the successful education of the Chinese people, because the introduction of a constitutional system required qualified citizens who possessed knowledge and consciousness of political participation, technical knowledge and skills. Liang Qichao termed this “reform from below” (开民智 *kai minzhi*). All of them referred to education.

Liang Qichao also talked of taking radical solutions to the problem, in his essay entitled “On the harm of carrying out reform without knowing what is of basic importance” one of his influential series “General discussion of reform” published in

¹⁷⁴ It should be noted here that Yang was neither the first nor the only person to advocate the intellectual-educational approach in the modern Chinese history. Educational reform was at the centre of Zhang Zhidong's concerns regarding the modernisation of China, as well as being a fundamental part of Kang/Liang's comprehensive political programme for the reform movement of 1895 to 1898.

1896 and 1897, which seems to have influenced Yang, as can be seen when we compare the passages below.

While Liang wrote:

To sum up in a word, the basis of reform lies in the cultivation and development of talent; the flourishing of talent depends on the establishment of schools; the establishment of schools depends on changing the examination system; and the key to achieve all this lies in reforming the civil service system (变官制 *bian guanzhi*).¹⁷⁵

Yang stated:

If we want to carry out political institutional reform we must first change the civil-service examination system and educational system. If we want to make changes in the civil-service examination system and educational system, we must first reform knowledge (or learning?) and scholarship (学术 *xueshu*).¹⁷⁶

Doubtless, Yang agreed substantially with Liang, however, a fundamental difference is also obvious. Yang omitted on purpose Liang's final point, that is, "reforming the civil service system (变官制 *bian guanzhi*).” Instead, he substituted “knowledge and scholarship” (学术 *xueshu*) showing that, for Yang, “knowledge and scholarship” were of the foremost basic importance and the most decisive element. Such a view is highly significant for Yang's commitment to the so-called intellectualistic and educational approach. Yang went on along the line of his thought of the dichotomy of “changes from below” and “changes from above”

Reforming the civil-service examination system and the educational system belongs to the category of “changes from above,” while reforming the intellectual knowledge and scholarship (学术 *xueshu*) belongs to “changes from below.”¹⁷⁷

According to Yang, “above reform” referred to the matter of institutions and systems, while “below reform” referred to intellectual pursuits. We should also bear in mind that in Yang's theory, “below” was the basis or source of “above”; thus when it came to settling a problem once and for all, changing knowledge and scholarship was the point of departure.

¹⁷⁵ Liang Qichao. “Lun bianfa buzhi benyuan zhi hai” (On the harm of carrying out reform without knowing what is of basic importance), in *Shiwu bao* [Chinese progress], vol. 3, 39 (29 Aug. 1896 and 17 Sept. 1897), cited in Liang's *Yinbingshi wenji* [Anthology of Drinking Ice Studio], Vol. 1, p. 10. For a modern study of Liang's reformist thought see Hao Chang's *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, referring to “Bianfa tongyi,” (General discussion on reform) especially pp. 77-80.

¹⁷⁶ Yang Changji, “Dahua zhai riji (1903),” *Wenji*, p. 28.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

As mentioned above Yang was in favour of “reform from below,” partly because of his way of thinking to seek to solve the root problem first, and partly because of his realistic consideration:

Because I am not in any particular office, I am powerless. In the world one can only depend on oneself. ... The people in low positions should regard changing from below as an individual's duty.¹⁷⁸

Such a view reflects also the influence of what Munro called the notion of “strict political and social functional division”, what Schwartz called the traditional attitude of “role playing,” and what Xie Youwei (Hsie Yu-wei) called “performing one's duties rather than claiming one's rights.”¹⁷⁹ The essential aspect of these three assumptions actually refers to one idea, that is, that one plays one's part. That was not only the Confucian ideal of being a human, but was also seen as a necessity for maintaining a sound and harmonious society. The notion that one plays one's own part did help in forming a social and political obedience to the authority of higher rank and socio-political indifference. However, although Yang did not draw on the passive aspect of determinism, he did emphasise the positive aspect of indeterminism. One could not transgress one's social position, but one still could do his best to rejuvenate state and society.

How then does one go about reforming from below? There is no other way than doing one's utmost in pursuing knowledge (学问 *xuewen*) and in engaging oneself with education and transformation [of people] (教化 *jiaohua*).¹⁸⁰

Knowledge or learning (学问 *xuewen*) provided a necessary foundation for guidance of action; thus it was seen as essential. For people like Yang who had no official appointment, the “education and transformation of the people” (教化万民 *jiaohua wanmin*) was seen as the only way to carry out the task. It is well known that the idea of “education and transformation of people” was one of the core ideas of Confucian political philosophy and one of the three major tasks of Confucian government, yet,

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Donald J. Munro, *The concept of man in early China* (1977), chapter 2, especially, the section “the social order”, pp.23-29. B. I. Schwartz, “Hierarchy, status, and authority in Chinese culture,” in *China and other matters* (1996), p. 127. Hsie Yu-wei, “The status of the individual in Chinese ethics,” in *The Chinese Mind* (1967), p. 314.

¹⁸⁰ Yang Changji, “Dahua zhai riji (1903)” in *Wenji*, p. 28.

it still played a central role in shaping Yang's thoughts on political reform.¹⁸¹ As mentioned above, Yang left out the reform of the official system, so it is not surprising that he was committed to an intellectualistic and educational approach instead of a political approach to solving China's problem. No doubt, Liang Qichao emphasised the education of the people as the foundation of political reform, however, at the same time, he occupied himself with campaigning for institutional reform from above. For him the institutional reform of the government was the pressing task, though he asserted that China's revitalisation depended on the education of the people.¹⁸²

Yang's advocacy of an intellectualistic and educational approach is based on his idea regarding the relationship between *jiao* (教 teaching) and *zheng* (政 government or politics) that is deeply rooted in the traditional Confucian political ideal of the sage-king and the "unity of government (政 *zheng*) and teaching (教 *jiao*)" or governing through teaching. Yang noted,

In ancient times sages conducted themselves not only as political rulers but also as teachers, while the states of later generations took teaching (教 *jiao*) as the basis of government. He who was willingly followed and cherished by the people (民 *min*) was called "king" (王 *wang*). The "Son of Heaven" was a king with a throne (位 *wei*), and the sage was a king without throne. The Son of Heaven was a king of one generation, while a sage was a king of a hundred generations.¹⁸³

Regarding the usage of *jiao* here, the Chinese term has two basic meanings. One means *jiaoyu* or *jiaohua* (教化 education or instruction, and transformation through education) referring to the school system and to activities involving pedagogic persuasion and training. It is tied in with the concept of learning, which is considered to be an intellectual pursuit (学 *xue*). The other denotes religious systems (宗教 *zongjiao*) in general and Confucian doctrine as a faith and state ideology in particular.¹⁸⁴ Yang Changji's use of *jiao* (教 teaching) involves both at the same

¹⁸¹ The three cardinal functions of traditional Confucian government included: "education and transformation of people, "imposing and collecting taxes" (催科田賦 *cuike tianfu*) and "ensuring public security" (确保治安 *quebao zhi'an*), see Zhang Pengyuan, *Zhongguo xiandaihua de quyue yanjiu - Hunan sheng* [Modernization in China, 1860-1916: A regional study of social, political and economic change in Hunan province], pp. 52-56.

¹⁸² Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, p. 80.

¹⁸³ Yang Changji, "Dahuaizhai riji" (1903) *Wenji*, p. 28.

¹⁸⁴ For a brief discussion of *jiao*'s meanings and English translation see Luke Kwang's *A mosaic of hundred Days* (1984), p. 105-7 and p. 279, fn.17. Dissatisfied with the translation "religion" by

time. Thus *jiao* for Yang had a two-folded meaning: at the level of the content, it denotes that which is taught, at the level of the methodology it refers to education.

The idea that a sovereign was not simply a political ruler but also a teacher can be traced as early as the ancient legends about “king” which were recorded in the Confucian classics, such as the *Book of Documents*, the *Book of Songs* and the *Book of Changes*. The story of these so-called “sage-kings” provides historical evidences for supporting the Confucian political ideal of the sage-king in which the idea of the “unity of government and teaching” was expressed. To be sure, one of the most striking characteristics of the Chinese political culture was *zhengjiao heyi* (政教合一), a conception which indicates a “symbiotic equality of teaching with all other government activities.”¹⁸⁵ Historically, China had experienced a two-fold process: the moralisation of politics and the politicisation and legalisation of morality. As a result, on the one hand, Confucian moral values had become meshed into every aspect of the state's political life, while, on the other hand, Confucianism as a state ideology functioned in controlling spiritual, cultural and social life. The synthesis of government with teaching also found its expression in the Confucian idea of universal kingship in which the king came to embody within his person both the supreme political authority and the spiritual-ethical authority.¹⁸⁶ As A. Woodside points out, such a highly centripetal model of a unity of “government” and “teaching” was indeed alien to the tradition in the Christian West of dividing spiritual and secular power.¹⁸⁷

The underlying idea was no doubt the Confucian political ideal of “benevolent government” (仁政 *renzheng*) which rested entirely on the paramount Confucian

Hsiao Kung-ch'uan and “faith” by Hao Chang, he coined the term “religio-cultural tradition.” But the problem is that his rendering cannot be valid in all cases, for “tradition” contains broader meanings than *jiao*. “Teaching” used by Schwartz and many others seems to be a perfect alternative. I use “teaching” unless there is a need to distinguish it.

¹⁸⁵ A. Woodside, “The divorce between the political centre and educational creativity in late imperial China,” in *Education and society in late imperial China, 1600-1900*, (University of California Press, 1994) p. 462.

¹⁸⁶ For the politicisation and legalisation of morality see Tu Wei-ming, “The Sung Confucian idea of Education: A background understanding” in *Education and society in late imperial China, 1600-1900*, (University of California Press, 1994) p. 146, and John Wu, “Chinese legal and political philosophy” in *The Chinese mind* (Honolulu: 1967), p. 224. Schwartz, “The primacy of political order in east Asian society” in his *China and other matters* (Harvard University press, 1996), p. 114.

¹⁸⁷ Alexander Woodside, “The divorce between the political centre and educational creativity in late imperial China,” p. 462.

value of *humanity*. That largely conditioned its political thought. No doubt, the aim of government was directed at socio-political stability and assuring people's well-being, but that was not the end. The ultimate end was to achieve the "prevailing of the great Way," namely "humanity," in the world. Sound society should be created by men of virtue. The moral quality of man could be obtained only through education and persuasion not punishment and coercion. Accordingly, in the political aspect, Confucians held the inseparability of spiritual-moral force and political authority and the correlation of the virtue of the ruler and the ability of government. The real guarantee for an adequate rulership lay in its acceptable performance rather than its preconceived Mandate of Heaven. Because "Heaven sees as the peoples see and hears as the people hear," people's trust and support was taken as the most significant and fundamental of the three prerequisites for a good government. To satisfy the basic needs of the people and to assure socio-political order thus depended on the "power of moral persuasion" in the way of education and exemplary teaching rather than penal laws. The idea that the "people were the foundation of a state" (民本思想 *minben sixiang*) was one of the most important components of Confucian political thought.

The policy of so-called "light government" was strongly tied to the socio-economic sphere. One of the most important underlying considerations referred to the Confucian idea of the effect of the environment on the moral quality of man. Assuring the socio-political order and promoting people's welfare were necessary prerequisites for the creation of a favourable social environment in which a sense of moral autonomy in the people could be fostered, since Confucians held that a benevolent government could rely only on the autonomous moral sense of the people.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, it is no wonder that education and indoctrination, and the transformation of the mass of people were the foremost tasks of government in Imperial China.

The virtue of the ruling elite was also considered a necessary requirement for a benevolent government. Relying heavily upon a belief that the influence of the ruler's integrity would radiate all around, and make a "transformation where he

¹⁸⁸ Schwartz, *The world of thought in ancient China*, (1985), pp. 102-8.

passes,”¹⁸⁹ Confucius proclaimed, “Governing (政 *zheng*) means to correct (正 *zheng*). If you set an example by being correct, who would dare to remain incorrect.”¹⁹⁰ *Zheng* thus denoted not only the correction and transformation of people’s minds (正人心 *zheng renxin*), but also the rulers’ moral perfection.¹⁹¹ The self-cultivation of everyone from the Son of Heaven to the commoners was regarded as the foundation and root of social order, political stability and universal peace. The ruler’s virtue was therefore seen as one of the three sources of all political authority and as a critique of despotism.¹⁹²

The prominent conception of the “sage-king” became an integral part of the Confucian ideal of benevolent government. The Sage-king lived not only as an ideal. According to Confucian classics, such as the *Book of Changes* and the *Book of Documents*, the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors, legendary figures who lived in the period of incipient Chinese civilisation, Yao and Shun, in particular, were considered to be “sage-kings.” These prehistorical kings were described as paradigms of a perfect fusion of government through teaching. They taught their people the knowledge and skill to live, and won people’s trust and attained social harmony through the exemplary power of their own virtue. These stories become the most important source of inspiration for Confucian intellectuals of later generations as a standard to challenge the present authorities, a fact which may partly explain why China has placed an extremely high value on education. Kang-Liang’s reform programme in which education was at the centre and regarded as the starting point provides another indication of the decisive role of *jiao* (teaching) in Chinese socio-political life. This became the source of inspiration for Yang to regard *jiao* as the basis of politics. For him, the “crown” was less important. A true king was a sage who was supported by the people’s trust. The judgement was based on a consideration of time, for eternity was seen as a distinctive property of truth and principle.

However, Yang did not stop here, but went even further to claim that politics should be subordinated to teaching:

¹⁸⁹ *Mencius*, 7A:13.

¹⁹⁰ Cited in Lau’s translation of *Analects*, XII.17.

¹⁹¹ *Daxue* [The Great Learning], 1:6.

It is well known that teaching and politics go side by side, there is no conflict between them; however, only a few people know that teaching is the commander in chief of politics.¹⁹³

As mentioned above, Yang insisted on reform from below, for he thought that the bottom was the basis of the above. At this point we may also say that Yang held that a radical healing approach was required in order to solve China's problems. But, what he thought of as "radical" is different from what we now think. Instead of political institutions or social order, he regarded *jiao* as fundamental and radical. Now we can see that Yang's idea of a "radical healing approach" was also backed by his conviction that "teaching" was both the basis and commander of "politics."

Of course, Yang was not alone in emphasising the significant role of *jiao* (教 teaching). Historically, in a time of socio-political turmoil, it had been a significant source of inspiration for reform. For instance, at the end of the Ming dynasty, Huang Zongxi's drastic theoretical attempt to "school-ise" the imperial political system based on the idea that "government" and "teaching" would not merely be united, but that government should derive from schools, provides a remarkable example.¹⁹⁴

At the end of the nineteenth-century a reform movement inaugurated and driven by the Kang-Liang group was another example. Like Huang Zongxi, education reform focusing on the total remodelling of structures was considered to be the key to political reform. Instead of "schoolising" political institutions, study societies, a new organisational and educational instrument, were created. These study societies functioned as a leading organisation in educating and mobilising the gentry-literati through various cultural activities such as delivering lectures, setting up libraries and newspapers, and laying the ground work for a local legislature in order to promote gentry power (兴绅权 *xing shenquan*). This was seen as a necessary preliminary step for achieving popular participation and sovereignty.

Behind the reform programme were the twin notions of - "protecting the faith" (保教 *baojiao*) and "protecting the state" (保国 *baoguo*). For them, the "protecting the faith"

¹⁹² John C. H. Wu, p. 213.

¹⁹³ Yang Changji, "Dahuazhai riji" (1903), *Wenji*, p. 28.

¹⁹⁴ The term "school-ize" is coined by A Woodside in his "The divorce between the political centre and educational creativity in late imperial China," p. 466. For a discussion of Huang's proposal for the

was even more fundamental. In exploring the underlying thought one cannot fail to recognise their holistic view of China; that is, China was not only a socio-political entity but also a religio-cultural one. Such a view was no doubt influenced profoundly by the prominent Confucian political ideal of the “unity of politics and teaching.”

However, the belief in “teaching” as the foundation of a state then gained new support from the history of Western civilisation. For instance, Liang argued, “the reason why the West has such a civilisation as it has now must be seen in the occurrence of the religious revolution (宗教革命 *zongjiao geming*) and the revival of classical learning. This is because religion (宗教 *zongjiao*) has furnished the medical ingredients from which the human mind was moulded.”¹⁹⁵ He also drew upon the story of how a few Christian founders, by means of astonishing resolution and will power, endured extraordinary hardship in order to bring about the rising and flourishing of Christianity, thus inspiring the conclusion that “just as no people can be governed without a creed (教 *jiao*), no country can be established without a creed, and the state is subject to normative control by the creed.”¹⁹⁶

All of these assertions were based on a moral-idealistic outlook that mind and faith commanded human behaviour and action, accordingly, Yang stated, the “rise and fall of a state has a direct bearing on the citizen’s knowledge and ability. The improvement of the knowledge and ability depends on citizen’s minds; noble minds and a profundity of thought are decided by a citizen’s customs and belief.”¹⁹⁷ As to the real implication of Kang’s “preservation of teaching” (保教 *baojiao*), Liang explained that one of the fundamental reasons why China was far inferior to the West was that “true Confucian tenets had been lost.” “The exaltation and promotion of the authentic Confucian teachings” was thus regarded as the only way to ensure China’s

re-construction of the imperial government in the way to re-establish a school system according to ancient school system in order to let it become the arbiter of politics, see A. Woodside, pp. 465-476.

¹⁹⁵ Liang Qichao, “Lun Zhina zongjiao gaige” [On China’s religious reform] (1899) in *Yibingshi wenji* [Anthology of “eating-ice” studio] (1899), vol. 3 (Taiwan, 1960), p. 55. The translation is based on Hao Chang, see his *Liang Ch’i-ch’ao*, p. 115.

¹⁹⁶ Liang Qichao, “Fu youren lun baojiao shu” (A reply to a friend discussing preservation of faith) (1897) in *Yibingshi wenji* [Anthology of “eating-ice” studio], vol. 3, (Taiwan, 1960), p. 9-10. For the translation see Hao Chang’s *Liang Ch’i-ch’ao*, p. 115.

¹⁹⁷ Liang Qichao, “Lun Zhina zongjiao gaige” (On China’s religious reform) (1899), *Yibingshi wenji* [Anthology of “eating-ice” studio], vol. 3 (Taiwan, 1960), p. 55.

revival. "This was what Kang Youwei really devoted himself to."¹⁹⁸ Therefore, as Hao Chang points out, they expected that the exaltation and promotion of Confucianism could bring about similar results in China to those achieved by the Renaissance and Reformation in modern European countries.¹⁹⁹

A similar moral-idealistic trait can also be found in Yang's conception of the relationship between governing and teaching. It is revealed clearly in his discussion of its metaphysical basis.

In establishing a state, legal and political institutions (法制 *fazhi*) provide its body and power while teaching and transformation (教化 *jiaohua*) endow its essence and spirit (精神 *jingshen*). Legal and political institutions are limited by time and situation, teaching and transformation can transcend the past and present. Legal and political institutions have definite forms, thus belong to *yin* (passive cosmic force); teaching and transformation are formless, and thus belong to *yang* (active cosmic force). That which has a definite form (有形 *youxing*) cannot restrict the operation of that which is formless (无形 *wuxing*), while that which is formless can transform that which has a definite form.²⁰⁰

One may have noted already that Yang used a cluster of terms to characterise *jiaohua* or "teaching and transformation" and *fazhi* or "the law and political institutions." Firstly, he explained organisms by an analogy of body and spirit, which are interdependent on each other, yet the "spirit" takes the commanding role. From a historical perspective he observed that the law and political systems varied according to different times, while the Confucian idea of *jiaohua* had withstood the test of two thousand odd years and was immutable and irreplaceable. Hence *jiaohua* had an eternal nature, and should be regarded a truth surpassing time and space. The foremost point made by Yang is "that which is formless can transform (化 *hua*) that which has a form."

No doubt, Yang's concepts of "that which has a definite form" and "that which is formless" derive from the prominent Confucian notions of *xing'ershang* or "that which is above form" and *xing'erxia* or "that which is with form" in the *Book of Changes*. In classical Confucianism the *Dao* (Way, or abstract principle) was defined

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ See Hao Chang's *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, p. 115.

²⁰⁰ Yang Changji, "Dahuazhai riji" (1903), *Wenji*, p. 28.

as “that which is above definite form” (形而上 *xing'ershang*) and *qi* (氣 the material force) as “that which is within the realm of determinate form.” (形而下 *xing'erxia*) Among the various connotations the basic one is that the *Dao* denoted the ultimate source of the universe and *qi*, (sometimes rendered as instrument or vessel) implied the *Dao*'s function and its manifestation. In Song Neo-Confucian metaphysics, the category of *li/qi* (principle/material force) became prominent. The *Dao* was thus understood as the *li* (principle) or that by which (所以 *suoyi*) the *yin* and *yang* alternated and operated to generate the myriad things. While *li* denoted “that which is above form”, *yin* and *yang* were understood as two opposite *qi* or “material force” each of which was classified as “that which is within the realm of form.”²⁰¹ Although *li* (principle or moral principle) was given logical priority over *qi*, the relationship between the two was not thought necessarily as being absolutely antithetical but rather as inseparably complementary, or a unity of opposites. This dialectal mode of thought was intensively applied in the diverse aspects and thus produced very different formulations, such as *yin/yang*, *dong/jing* (motion/tranquillity), *you/wu* (being/nonbeing), *ti/yong* (substance/function) and *li/qi* (principle/material force) in metaphysics; *zhi/xing* (knowledge and practice) in epistemology, *neixiu/waizhi* (inner self-cultivation/outer ordering of society) in moral philosophy, and *zheng/jiao* (governing/teaching) in political philosophy. In the light of these connotations, it is clear why Yang asserted that “teaching and politics go along side by side, there is no conflict between them” and “teaching is the commander-in-chief of politics,” as cited above.

The nature of *yin/yang* in Confucian cosmology chiefly denotes *qi* or “material force.”²⁰² *Qi* is completely different from the concept of matter as understood by Western science or philosophy. *Qi* could denote something spiritual, vital and material. It is formless but could assume any form. It is thought to have active properties, and is thus unlike matter or ether in the West; it does not need to wait for

²⁰¹ The Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi all defined the *Dao* as *li* (principle). Zhang Zai was an exception. He thought that the *Dao* was a process in which *yin* and *yang*, two opposite *qi* (material force), through their intercourse and alternation, generated the myriad things. See Zhang Dainian, (1989), p. 28-9. For discussion of the Cheng brothers' view of *Dao* see Graham's *Two Chinese Philosophers*.

²⁰² Zhang Dainian, (1989), p. 86-7. For the definitions and English translation see Chan Wing-tsit, *A source book*, p. 784.

some external force to set it in motion. Furthermore, it is real and exists.²⁰³ That Yang identified *yin* with that which has a form and *yang* with that which is formless is an apparent reflection of Zhang Zai's influence, whose works Yang read intensively during his twenties. Using a line used from the *Book of Changes* to the time of Zhou Dunyi, Zhang held that the origin of the universe was "the Great Harmony (太和 *taihe*)," (namely, the Great Ultimate in the *Book of Changes* and Zhou's metaphysics) by which Zhou meant a state before the separation of *yinqi* (passive material force) and *yangqi* (active material force). When *qi* condensed, there were forms. Thus we can see it. When *qi* does not integrate or in a dispersed state, there are no forms. However one cannot call it non-being simply because of its invisibility. *Yin* was used to denote the tranquil state of *qi* in which *qi* could become condensed and the concrete thing come into being, thus becoming visible, while *yang* signified the dynamic potentiality of *qi*. In such an active state the *qi* dispersed and there were no forms, thus nothing could be seen.²⁰⁴ That is why Yang identified "that which has form" with *yin* and "formlessness" with *yang*.

Having shed light on *yin/yang* and "that which has form" and "that which is formless" we can now turn to the key concept of *hua* (化 transformation or metamorphosis) in Yang's proposition. Semantically, the basic and common meaning of *hua* is to transform, change; however, it has a cosmological and ontological meaning in Confucian philosophy. To a certain extent, Confucian and Neo-Confucian cosmology and cosmogony are encapsulated in the notion *hua*. In traditional Confucian thought, the cosmos was considered to be a spontaneously self-generating entity. There were no external sources such as creator, god, ultimate cause or Will as are presented in the Western tradition.²⁰⁵ The interaction of *yin* and *yang*, two vital forces (*qi*), transformed and engendered (化生 *huasheng*) the myriad things. The process of transformation (化 *hua*) and production (生 *sheng*) continued without end. The universe was thus taken as a ceaseless flux of change and life. As E. R. Hughes observes, one of the most intrinsic characteristics of Chinese philosophy was to see reality as either "becoming" or "de-becoming." Such a view is indeed alien to

²⁰³ Tang Junyi, (1956), p. 120.

²⁰⁴ *Zhang Zai ji*, ch.1, p. 8. See Chan, Wing-tsit, *A source book*, p. 506. For a modern study see Kasof, pp. 38-42; Tang Junyi, (1956) p. 123 and Zhang Dainian, (1982), pp. 43-8.

Western philosophers who were occupied with the question of what it is and hardly thought that a thing could both be and not be at the same time.²⁰⁶

Song Neo-Confucianism enriched the classical Confucian cosmology, notably in Zhang Zai's theory of *qi* (material force). For Zhang, the world was the result of the movement of the fusion and intermingling of *yinqi* (阴气) and *yangqi* (阳气) according to the certain principle (namely, *Dao*). The original substance of *qi* (material and vital force) was the so-called Great Vacuity which was tranquil and formless. "As it is acted upon, it engenders the two fundamental elements of *yin* and *yang*, and through integration it gives rise to forms." In this light we can make sense of what Yang meant by the idea of formlessness that could transform that which has form. The essential nature of *qi* (气 vital force) inspired Yang to identify *jiaohua* with "that which is formless;" thereby he came to believe that *jiao* had the same natures and the same influential power of transformation (化 *hua*) as the cosmic vital force (气 *qi*). It is that by which Yang prescribed *jiaohua* as something spiritual, as something referring to conscious and volitional action and as the *yangqi* or "active vital force," which, at the same time, like *qi*, was immanent but also transcendent. Hence, that which has form or concrete things could not impede that which is formless.

No doubt, Yang took a holistic view of *fazhi* (法制 legal and political institutions) and *jiaohua* (教化 teaching and transformation), that is, they were inseparable and complementary. Otherwise we could not explain why Yang called so emphatically for political and institutional reform. However, it is also evident that he gravitated toward *jiaohua* as the spirit of a country rather than *fazhi* as its physical body. From the perspective of the mode of thinking we can understand Yang's dialectic. Things and affairs were seen as a unity of two inseparable complementary polarities. Within this unity one was primarily playing a commanding role and the other adopted a secondary, subordinate position. Such dialectics were used not only in his discussions of the relations between *fazhi* and *jiaohua*, but also in that of relations between school-education and social-education.

²⁰⁵ Frederick F. Mote, *Intellectual foundations of China* (New York: 1971), pp 17-8. Cited in Tu Wei-ming's "The continuity of being: Chinese visions of nature" in *Confucian thought*, p. 35.

Yang's belief in the omnipotence of *jiaohua* was also geared to his newly acquired knowledge of Western education. Like Liang Qichao's idea of *kai minzhi* (开民智 education of people) this knowledge was filled with new content. Having considered the education system of Western countries, Yang divided education into three categories: family, school and social education and pointed out that China had no school education, while family education and social education were emphasised. He criticised the tendency of paying attention only to family education and argued that the scope of family education was narrow and small, and "merely to rely on family education was definitely insufficient to provide the qualified talents for the needs of a modern state."²⁰⁷

The school- and social-education were at the centre of his concern. He distinguished the two from the aspects of their aims, scopes and dialectic relationship.

We have to pay attention to school-education if we want to bring up citizens, while attention has to be focused on social-education in order to reform old customs. School-education can enhance the strength of the citizenry, while social-education is the driving force to arouse the world.²⁰⁸

The traditional methodology of dichotomy was applied to describe a dialectic relationship between the two kinds of education.

From the perspective of form, school-education is the primary and social-education the secondary. [However,] from the perspective of spirit, social-education is a original impulse (原动力 *yuan dongli*) for organising and establishing school-education; it then generates a enduring power to sustain (持续力 *chixu li*) school-education through its supervision; finally, it issues a great push (猛进力 *mengjing li*) to improve school-education. ... In the present world of competition between nations, nationalism (国家主义 *guojia zhuyi*) has inevitably become a dominant maxim (公理 *gongli*). Therefore we should emphasise school-education in order to achieve the solidarity and unity of the citizens (国民之统一 *guomin zhi tongyi*). Nevertheless, the key to attain this end is to take social-education as the guiding force (先驱 *xianqu*).²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ E. R. Hughes, "Introduction" to *The Great Learning & The mean-in-action*, London, 1942, p. 52.

²⁰⁷ Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu fanlun," p. 865.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

Therefore, he asserted,

By relying solely on school-education without social-education, a state cannot be established; this is an evident truth.²¹⁰

Yang laid particular stress on social-education, the maintenance and reform of school-education, though he was clearly trying to find a balance between the two. Social-education was primary and school-education secondary in this dialectic. Once again he led the discussion involved in the dichotomy of reform from above and below.

School-education belongs to the category of reform from above while social-education to that of reform from below. We cannot depend on reform from above, what we can depend on is reform from below. The reforms of other countries in the world without exception all started with [reforming and educating] people and social-education, for it was hardly feasible to depend on government for help in initiating a campaign for the promotion of school-education.²¹¹

What does Yang mean by term “social-education”? He noted:

For two thousand years China has had no school education, and maintenance of society has relied mainly on men of benevolence (仁人 *renren*) and superior men (君子 *junzi*) who set examples in morality and scholarship to the people of the country (国人 *guoren*). The benefits of social education have been recognised as a fact since antiquity.²¹²

It is clear that social-education denotes the practice and model of traditional Chinese education, that is, transformation through the moral power of superior men. The suppression of the reform of 1898 allowed Yang to be more clearly aware of the discredits of the government. He became committed even more firmly to the notion of reform from below, although simultaneously Yang claimed that “in the time of struggle for survival between nations, in which nationalism is recognised as a dominant axiom, we should place weight on school education.”²¹³

It should be noted that Yang's commitment to *jiaohua* was the logical outcome of his commitment to the Confucian ideal of *jingshi* (经世 statesmanship) or *waiwang* (外王

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

outer kingship) which involved primarily the task of “instructing and transforming the people” through teaching and personal example.

It should be noted as well that the idea of *jiaohua* is rooted in the fundamental Confucian idea of human nature, namely, that men were malleable; this was strongly supported by the Confucian belief that “by nature, men are nearly alike” or in Munro’s term “man’s natural equality.”²¹⁴ Accordingly at the core of the Confucian notion of human nature were the unique qualities and functions of the human mind, such as moral sense, volition and rational capacities with which all men were equally endowed at birth. This view of human mind enabled Confucians to stand on firm ground to proclaim that every one could be a Yao or Shun (sage-rulers in prehistory) if the economic and educational conditions were sufficient. Together with the Confucian view of man and society it produced a tendency to emphasise an intellectualistic and educational approach to the solving of social and political problems. Yang’s commitment to *jiaohua* demonstrates the fact that Yang remained committed to those fundamental Confucian ideas of human nature.

Finally, we see that Yang’s commitment to *jiaohua* is tied closely to his moral, idealistic, voluntaristic and activist outlook:

In heaven there is no greater power than the sun; in the earth there is no greater power than electricity; in men there is no greater power than the mind. Where *yangqi* (阳气 active vital force) radiates, even gold and rock can be penetrated; where the spirit is applied, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished.²¹⁵

The passage is permeated with a strong subjective idealistic and voluntarist tone. Through glorifying the infinite power of the human spirit and mind, Yang came to stress human or subjective factors in bringing about a new society and in the development of history. For Yang, the human or subjective factor referred primarily to individual moral creativity and efforts and the realisation of the *junzi*’s ideal was the source of inspiration for collective creativity.

When we trace the origins of the concept *jiaohua*, it is easy to find that the idea is a inevitable expression of the Confucian activist, idealistic and voluntaristic tradition

²¹⁴ *Analects*, 17.2. Donald Munro, *The Concept of Man in early China*, (1969), pp. 13-6.

²¹⁵ Yang Changji, “Dahuazhai riji” (1903), *Wenji*, p. 28.

in which the pivotal role of mind and spirit, subjective will and power of will, and moral autonomy in the social progress were all emphasised. Man as the essence of Heaven and Earth's creation was regarded as the agent of Heaven who governed the world. There was of course determinism; nevertheless, Confucians also believed in man's subjective initiatives, that is, that man could mould his environment and create history through his effort in accordance with the *Dao*. Indeed, this tradition is more clearly to be found in the lineage of the so-called school of mind-heart which started with Mengzi and was handed through Lu Xiangshan down to Wang Yangming. However, its rival, the school of principle represented by the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi contributed substantially to this idealistic and voluntarist tradition, since both schools shared a common base, namely, the Confucian ideal of humanity. As chapter 2 showed, Mencius, the heritage of the Hunan school with its emphasis on mind-heart, and Cheng-Zhu's activism were the major sources of influence on Yang during his early twenties, while in his later twenties and early thirties, or during the period of reform 1897-8, Yang came under the influence of the Lu-Wang idealistic school. This is evident in a passage of his diary written in the period between 1896 and 1902:

The aspiration to become a sage (希圣 *xisheng*) is inferior to the aspiration to understand [the principle of] Heaven (希天 *xitian*), and the [Confucian] moral doctrine (名教 *mingjiao*) is inferior to the [laws of] nature (自然 *ziran*). Having understood it, we then come to realise both how outstanding and remarkable Lu's and Wang's thought are, and that their thoughts could hardly be attained by others. Lu Xiangshan's comment 'The six Classics are nothing but the footnote [of my thought]' and Wang Yangming's advocacy of idea of the 'extension of an good inner knowledge' (致良知 *zhi liangzhi*), all imply an appeal for freeing thought from man-made social moral doctrines and for intensive exploration of the natural laws of Heaven and Earth.²¹⁶

Yang's embracing of Lu-Wang's idealism may be seen as a corollary of his intellectual inclination towards the study of mind-heart within the Cheng-Zhu school during his early twenties as shown in chapter 2. This is important if we are to understand not only the origin of Yang's idealism and voluntarism but also the root ideas which were the premise or precondition of Yang's formulation of a relationship between *fazhi* (法治 government by law) and *jiaohua* (教化 government through

²¹⁶ Yang Changji, "Dahua zhai riji" (1903), *Wenji*, p. 25.

education and transformation) and between *zheng* (政 politics) and *jiao* (教 teaching). Furthermore it also provides convincing evidence of the direct intellectual ties of Mao Zedong's idealistic, voluntarist and individualistic strains of thought with the Lu-Wang idealistic school.

To sum up, underlying Yang's advocacy of "reform from below" was his view of "governing through education and transformation." His view of human nature, that is, man's natural equality and malleability, enabled him to regard education as the soul, source and foundation of a state and its government. Yang believed that education had an unlimited power to transform society through arousing people's inner moral sense. Such a process would not cease until the achievement of an ideal Confucian society. While family education was seen as out-of-date, school- and social-education became prominent in Yang's thought and Yang gave overwhelming weight to social-education or, more precisely, the role of the *junzi* through his moral example and scholarship. Philosophically, Yang's commitment to *jiao* and *jiaohua* was based on Confucian cosmology particularly referring to the concept of *qi*, as the vital force, and the movement of *yin-yang*.

After the failure of the reform movement of 1898, Yang returned to his rural home village, Bancang, in order to avoid political persecution. While he taught children as a private teacher in some families, he went on to pursue his "new learning." According to his diary of 1899 the curriculum set by himself consisted of six subjects: writing a diary (reading notes), *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* [A Compilation of essays on statecraft](edited by He Changlin and Wei Yuan in 1862), *Yupi Tongjian jilan* [The collection of *General Mirror for aid in Governance* in various annotated versions and *Outline and Digest of the General Mirror* approved by emperor], Wang Fuzhi's *Song lun* [On the Song dynasty], preparation for the civil service examination and English.²¹⁷ The main subjects he taught included *Gongyang Chunqiu* [*Spring and Autumn Annals* with Gongyang's commentaries], one of the key doctrines of the New Text school, *Tongjian* [Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Governance] and *Jiezi shuowen* [Understanding words through etymological analysis

²¹⁷ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1899), p. 16.

and semantic explanation].²¹⁸ These two curricula demonstrate clearly Yang's emphasis. The study of statecraft through a comprehensive understanding of Chinese history moved to the centre of Yang's concerns in this period, while self-cultivation had occupied Yang's study of Confucianism in his twenties. The influence of Kang Youwei and the New Text school is also evident. Teaching *Gongyang Chunqiu* indicates that Yang had studied it intensively before 1899, while Wang Fuzhi remained an important source for understanding the politics and history of China. All indicates Yang's commitment to Confucian social-political and moral ideals. It is not clear what kind of English textbook he used; however, the fact that he was still learning English itself shows his affirmation of the value of Western learning. It also paved directly a way for him in the future to realise his goal of acquiring what he called *shijie zhishi* or "world knowledge" in order to be able to provide up to date guidance to students and society.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

PART II

A Chinese Odyssey: Yang's Overseas Study in Japan, Scotland and Germany, 1903-1913

Chapter 4

The rise of the Chinese studying abroad movement

The government-sponsored programme of sending young Chinese boys to study in the United States in the early 1870s opened the first chapter of history of Chinese overseas study in modern times. The realization of the programme owed largely to one person, Rong Hong 容闳 (1828-1921), also known as Yung Wing. Born into a poor peasant family in Nanping (南屏) town only four miles from Macao, his father died when Rong Hong was very young. In 1841 encouraged by his mother to learn some English in order to get a job with an English family, he went to the Morrison school founded by the well-known Robert Morrison (1782-1834), a fervent missionary sent to China by the London Missionary Society. When Reverend Samuel Robbins Brown, a teacher and American missionary left for home, he selected three top students and took them to the United States in the spring of 1847. Rong was one of them. The other two were Huang Shen 黄胜 and Huang Kuan (黄宽 1828-1878), also known as Wong Fun. After two years study in Monson Academy in Massachusetts, Wong Fun went to Scotland enrolling at Edinburgh University in 1851 to study medicine. He graduated in MD in August 1855 and is now recognized as the first Chinese graduate of the University of Edinburgh and the first Chinese graduate from a European university. Rong Hong remained in America and enrolled at Yale University from where he graduated in 1854.¹

During his stay in America Rong Hong developed an interest in the reform of China. As suggested by the title of his autobiography, *The introduction of Western culture into China* [Xixue dongjianji] the subject was the central theme of his reform programme. When he became the adviser of Viceroy Zeng Guofan in 1863, his ambition to reform China was put to good use. It was embodied in two things: the establishment of the Jiangnan Arsenal and drafting of a programme of young

¹ The choice of medicine was not Huang Kuan's personal choice, but the desire of his sponsor. See Shu Xincheng, *Jiandai Zhongguo liuxue shi* [A history of Chinese students abroad in modern times], Shanghai, Zhonghua, 1929, pp.2-3.

Chinese men study in America.² The subjects of study, mathematics and engineering, were carefully chosen. Closely related to the army and navy, they were perfectly in accordance with the general aims of the self-strengthening movement, namely developing China's military technology and defence power. He studied for fifteen years.

Strongly supported by Zeng Guofan and his successor Li Hongzhang, Rong Hong played a decisive role in the formulation of the first study abroad programme. Because of his efforts between 1872 and 1875, 120 young Chinese boys were sent to study in the United States as government scholarship student. The initial difficulty he met was that he could not recruit a sufficient number of students, because substantial and well-educated families at that time would not allow their sons to study abroad partly out of a consideration of their future career prospects, partly out of a conventional view of the superiority of Chinese culture over others. The majority of the boys came from poor families in the remote southern coastal villages of Guangdong province. This first attempt was short lived. In 1881 it was abandoned amid criticism that the programme was nothing but a waste of money that produced only a group of Chinese who had been Americanised in terms of their style, manners and outlook.

About the same time, another plan to send students to European countries was initiated. In 1875 the first group of thirty-three Chinese students and apprentices was selected from the Fuzhou arsenal and shipyard to study in France. In the following year, 1876, Li Hongzhang sent seven army officers to Germany. From 1875 to 1895 around sixty students, apprentices and army officers in three successive groups were sent to France, England, Germany and Belgium. Unlike the students in America who learnt military science, navigation, ship-building and surveying, the emphasis for the students who went to Europe was on commanding and piloting a ship. These Europe-returned students and trainees later became the backbone of the Beiyang (Northern Sea) fleet which was seen as China's best fleet, until, unfortunately, it was largely destroyed during the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5).

²Zhong Shuhe, "Wei xixue dongjian er fendou yisheng de Rong Hong" (Rong Hong: a man who devoted his entire life to introducing Western Learning into China), *Zhongguo liuxue shicui* [The

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China's humiliating defeat by Japan in the Sino-Japanese War provided compelling reasons for Chinese to reflect on their previous view of Japan and the root causes of the achievement of wealth and power in Western countries. Traditionally, the Japanese image in Chinese eyes was typically reflected in phrases such as "dwarf bandits" and "eastern barbarians." China's knowledge of the social structure and economic and political life of modern Japan, particularly after the Meiji reform, was almost zero, because China and Japan had had no official contact for more than two hundred years prior to the 1870s. The first commercial agreement was signed in 1871 and He Ruchang, the first Chinese minister to Japan, arrived in 1877.³ Before the Sino-Japanese War, China maintained a firm view of the superiority of Chinese culture as a whole and also of her military superiority over Japan.

The travel accounts and geographical and historical writings of around one hundred Chinese diplomats who stayed in Japan between 1877 and 1894, opened an important window on Japan. Appointed as a legation counsellor, Huang Zunxian arrived in 1877 with He Ruchang. Huang formed intensive contacts with many influential Japanese intellectuals and politicians during his five years in the country.⁴ He was impressed by the achievement of the Meiji modernization notably the political institutions, the school system, the booming economic system and the legal system, all of which had benefited from copying the West. His admiring view of the Meiji reforms was crystallized in his book *Riben guo zhi* [A History of Japan]. Completed in 1887 when he was serving as Chinese consul-general in San Francisco, the book was not circulated until the time of the Sino-Japanese War and was published only in 1897, it soon became one of the most important sources of information on the Meiji reform and was read widely among the Hunanese literati.⁵ Furthermore the book was also submitted to the Guangxu Emperor. During the period of the Hunanese reform movement, Huang's legal and administrative reform programme focused on

essentials of a history of Chinese study abroad], Beijing: China Friendship Publishing Co., 1992, p. 202-3.

³ Paula Harrell, *Sowing the seeds of change*, pp.13-4.

⁴ Marius Jansen, "Japan and the Chinese Revolution of 1911," *Cambridge History of China*, Volume 11, *Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911*, p. 345; Paula Harrell, p. 14-5.

the establishment of a Bureau of Protection and Defence (保卫局 Baowei ju). It was modelled on the modern police system which Huang had seen in Japan and Western countries, and it was the only innovation to survive after the Hunanese reform movement was halted by the Qing court in the autumn of 1898.

The Meiji reform held a very special place in the minds of Chinese reformist thinkers such as Kang Youwei who suggested it as a successful living example for China's self-strengthening in his first memorial to the emperor in 1888. The victory of Japan in the Sino-Japanese War provided convincing evidence to the Chinese of the achievements of the Meiji reform. Reformist thinkers such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao believed that China's survival and rejuvenation depended largely upon the adoption of Western-style social and political institutions. In three memorials submitted to the Emperor from 1897 to 1898, Kang openly urged the Emperor to use his authority to change "the institutions of ancestors" on the model of Meiji Japan and Russian reform under Peter the Great. Together with his memorials, his writings such as *A study of the political reforms in Meiji Japan* and *An account of the reforms of Peter of Russia* were also forwarded to the throne through the Zongli Yamen.

Zhang Zhidong had his own guiding principles for and approach to the question of China's reform. He advocated a reform programme of gradual modification, based on education rather than rapid political changes, that differed from that of the emperor and the Kang-Liang group. However they both had a very similar educational reform programme in terms of encouraging studying abroad, the translation of Western books, and the establishment of a modern national school system. Zhang's view of study abroad was expressed nowhere better than in his *Exhortation to Study*, which was serialized first in the Hunanese reformist journal *Xiang xue bao* from April to June in 1898:

To study in the West for one year is better than reading Western books for five years ... to study in a Western school for one year is better than to study for three in Chinese schools.⁶

⁵ Marius Jansen, "Japan and the Chinese Revolution of 1911," *Cambridge History of China*, Volume 11, *Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911*, p. 345.

⁶ For the English translation of this quotation see M Jansen, p. 349.

Japan's rise after the Meiji reform, Zhang pointed out, had depended largely on the returned Western-trained students, such as "Itō, Yamagata, Enomoto, and Mutsu, who were students in the West twenty years ago." That was the lesson China should learn from Japan's Meiji experience. Out of very practical considerations Zhang strongly endorsed a study-in-Japan programme: geographical nearness would allow a low-cost budget in journey and language similarity would enable students to master Japanese in much shorter time and with greater ease than it would take to learn a Western language. Furthermore, "Western learning is extremely varied, and the Japanese have already selected its essentials. The Japanese, who have sifted through these, have weeded out the less important works. ... Since China and Japan have similar circumstances and customs, this would facilitate our imitation [of the West]. We can reap twice the results with half the effort. What could be better than that?"⁷ Therefore, study in Japan was seen as a shortcut to acquire the real sutra of Western culture which was envisaged as the precondition of China's achievement of wealth and power: there was no question of Japan being considered to possess any intrinsic value or cultural superiority over China.⁸ Zhang's remark typified the attitude of Chinese leaders toward Japan in the post-war years.

Of course, Zhang Zhidong was neither the first and nor the only Chinese official to advocate a study-in-Japan programme; however, that the idea of studying in Japan gained widespread support from court and high officials, stemmed from Zhang's publication of the *Exhortation to Study* in the summer of 1898.⁹ In Hunan, Chen Baozhen, governor-general of Hunan from 1895 to 1898 echoed Zhang's appeal, immediately working out a Hunan study-in-Japan plan, whereby fifty Hunanese students would be sent to Japan through a selection examination which would take place in July. Although thousands of candidates signed up for the examination. It was unfortunately aborted because of Cixi's September 21st *coup d'état*.¹⁰

⁷ Zhang Zhidong, section of "youxue" (study abroad) in *Quanxue pian* (Exhortation to Study). For English translation see Reynolds, p. 44.

⁸ Reynolds, *The Xinhai Revolution and Japan*, p. 44.

⁹ For example, Yang Shenxiu (1849-1898), a imperial censor, best remembered as one of the "six martyrs" in the Reform movement of 1898, forwarded a memorial in April 1898 calling for government sponsorship of study in Japan. He suggested entrusting the Zongli Yamen with the selection of qualified students for Japan. See Reynolds, p. 43.

¹⁰ "Shoufa dian" (Received and sent telegrams) (Special collection of the Institute of modern history, Academy Sinica, Taiwan), cited in Zhang Pengyuan, *Zhongguo xiandaihua de quyuan yanjiu* –

A fully-fledged study-in-Japan programme must be understood in the context of the so-called “Xinzheng Revolution” of the first decade of the twentieth century which coincided with the so-called “golden decade” of constructive and harmonious relations between China and Japan in the postwar period.¹¹ Although China’s reform suffered a setback with the crack-down on the 1898 reform movement, the extremely conservative faction headed by empress dowager Cixi in the Qing court was forced to issue a series of edicts to reform shortly after the Boxer uprising of 1900. This by no means indicated that the Qing rulers were convinced of the necessity of reform, but rather that they had no alternative. All they wanted was to maintain the status quo and to save their crown; however, the Xinzheng reform movement itself called for the building of a modern state, which was far beyond the initial intention of the Qing court.¹²

Thus in this negative posture, the Qing court undertook reform without any original programme of its own. The entire Xinzheng reform enterprise was grounded on the suggestions and ideas of a remarkable group of princes and ministers at the capital, and viceroys and governors in the provinces. Men like Zhang Zhidong, Liu Kunyi (刘坤一), Yuan Shikai (袁世凯 1859-1916), Zhang Baixi (张百熙 1847-1907) Zhao Erxun (赵尔巽 1844-1927), Duan Fang (端方 1861-1911), Cen Chunxuan (岑春煊 1861-1933), and Shen Jiaben (沈家本 1840-1913) were the real driving force. The “Xinzheng revolution” had three main aspects: education, the military system and

Hunan sheng [Modernization in China, 1860-1916: A regional study of social, political and economic change in Hunan province] (Taipei: 1983) p. 182.

¹¹ Douglas R. Reynolds challenges the conventional view of modern China’s revolution. He argues that the real revolution which ended China’s two thousand years imperial political order and its educational underpinnings, which considered China to be a country of governing through teaching (*zhengjiao heyi*), was not the 1911 Revolution but the Xinzheng, or New Systems Reform supported by the Qing government (between 1901 and 1911). The Xinzheng reform lay the educational and institutional foundations for republican China. Unlike the 1911 Revolution which involved political overthrow and was characterized by violence and bloodshed, the Xinzheng, as an intellectual and institutional transformation had touched the deepest layer of China’s social-political structure. Reynolds defines the Xinzheng as a revolution in a broad sense, since a revolution can be quiet and imperceptible and occur in multitudinous forms and various aspects. The term “golden decade” used by Reynolds refers to a productive and relatively harmonious relationship between China and Japan in the period from 1898 to 1907. He points out that it was hardly imaginable that the Xinzheng reform could have occurred without the influence of Japan. See his *China, 1898-1912: The Xinzheng Revolution and Japan*. Camb. Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993. Paula Harrell is mainly in agreement with Reynolds on the significant Japanese role in the Chinese Xinzheng reform. She provides a comprehensive account of Japanese influence on the Chinese student movement in Japan.

political institutions. To an extent, the main proposals and tasks of the Xinzheng reform movement can be seen as a continuity of those of the 1898 Reform movement; for instance, to abolish the eight-legged essays, to add Western subjects to curricula and examination programmes, to establish a national modern school system and send students abroad, to build up a new army and modern military schools and to introduce Western-style parliament into China's political life. All these had been discussed and advocated by reformist thinkers of the 1898 reform movement.

Zhang Zhidong was the key figure in shaping the late Qing educational reform blueprint which was firmly based on the principles outlined in his renowned *Exhortation to Study* of 1898. The central tasks of the programme had two main points: to reform the time-honored Confucianism-based civil-service examination system and to create a modern national school system. The outline of the educational reform programme was articulated in Zhang Zhidong's three memorials submitted to the throne in 1901, which he co-authored with Liu Kunyi (then governor-general of Liangjiang), in which need to train men of talent and promote modern education in order to strengthen China was re-emphasized. Studying abroad was seen as the first step required in order to enable the continuation of the entire programme, due to the problem of a lack of qualified teachers. Therefore, studying abroad, and in particular, sending officials and students to Japan and self-supported study abroad were encouraged by the Qing government.

At the same time, the reform of the examination system was undertaken, beginning in 1901 with the abolition of the eight-legged essay and the introduction of plainer expositions of the Confucian *Four Books* and *Five Classics* and essays on both Chinese history and government and on Western politics and scholarship. Furthermore, an imperial decree to convert the old provincial academies (书院 *shuyuan*) into Western-styled schools was issued in April 1902. Such schools had been opened by Zhang Zhidong in Hubei after the end of the Sino-Japanese War. These reform measures eventually led to the abolition of the civil-service examination system in 1905, thus going beyond Zhang's original intention.

¹² Chuzo Ichiko, "Political and institutional reform, 1901-11", vol.11, the *Late Ch'ing*, pt. II, p.

The Xinzheng Reform and the study-in-Japan programme in Hunan

In Hunan, the educational programme of the central government was sabotaged by the notorious conservative governor Yu Liansan and the influential provincial gentry-literatus Wang Xianqian (王先谦 1842-1917).

Yu was promoted during the suppression of the 1898 Reform. Ideologically he was completely in agreement with Wang Xianqian and Ye Dehui (叶德辉 1864-1927) both of whom objected to Kang-Liang's radical approach believing that it would sacrifice orthodox and central values and principles. So it was no wonder that Yu, as a provincial treasurer, provided strong support when the conservative elite faction rallied around Wang Xianqian in order to attack the radical reform programme. That was the reason why he was appointed as Hunan governor to replace Chen after Empress Cixi's September *coup d'état*. During his tenure he tried to liquidate any remaining Kang-Liang reformist elements in Hunan. He changed the title of the School of Current Affairs to the Qiushi Academy (Academy for Seeking Reality). Although, on the surface the previous curriculum was retained, in practice, however, the academy was controlled by the conservative gentry-literati. Radical reformist ideas and Western liberal concepts with which classrooms of the School of Current Affairs had been imbued could no longer be discussed. Chinese learning in terms of the orthodox doctrine of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism was emphasized.¹³ Yu Liansan also closed Guanqian jiu (官钱局 Bureau of Currency), established in 1895 by Chen Baozhen, which had functioned as a modern bank.¹⁴ Politically, he tightened control through a series of measures, including the suppression in the autumn of 1900 of the uprising of the Independent Society and Army led by Tang Caichang, and the revival of the authoritarian *baojia* (保甲) system of social control.

In Qing China, the gentry as a class of the social elite played a decisive role in the political life, administration, public activities and education all of which serves as the

411-5.

¹³ Zhang Pengyuan, *Xindaihua quyue yanjiu – Hunan sheng*, p. 169. According to Pi Xirui, "The curriculum of the Qiushi Academy consisted of six sections: three proportions referring to Chinese learning; two to mathematics and one to English. The new learning remained at 50%, although instructors in Chinese learning formed the majority." See his *Shifutang riji* [Diary of the studio of Shifu], entry of 1st December of the twenty-fourth year of the Guangxu reign. Cited in Luo Zitian, p. 65.

¹⁴ Zhang Pengyuan, *Xindaihua quyue yanjiu – Hunan sheng*, p. 256.

foundation of imperial institution at a local level.¹⁵ The promotion and development of Hunan's reform movement depended largely upon the participation and support of the Hunanese provincial elite. By the same token, the failure of the movement largely resulted from strong opposition from the still dominant conservative elite faction. During the post-reform period, Wang Xianqian still enjoyed a dominant influence and power in the province's policy-making and public activities.¹⁶

The nature of Wang's conservatism should be noted. While there is no doubt that Wang was the leader of the Hunanese conservative campaign against the radical reformist thought, he had been one of the pioneers of Hunan's reform movement. His reform thought began to take shape in the early years of the Guangxu reign (during the 1880s). The strengthening of the Navy, the promotion of foreign trade and commerce, and the development of China's manufacture and technology formed the core of his reform programme, which was based on a belief that the strength of a country lay in its wealth and that national wealth depended on the advance of industry and commerce. What made him different from other scholar-officials advocating self-strengthening or "foreign affairs" was his argument that the development of a manufacturing industry should be given priority over that of the military, for the former was the foundation of the latter.¹⁷

During the initial stages of the reform movement, Wang Xianqian echoed positively Chen Baozhen's reform programme. He and a few other provincial elite, some of whom were later to become the allies of his conservative campaign, took the lead in developing local manufacturing, electricity and shipping. As one of the first Hunanese gentry-literati to advocate the "introduction of new trends" (开风气 *kai fengqi*) into Hunan he bravely established the first steamship company in the

¹⁵ Hao Chang, "Intellectual Change and reform, 1890-8", p. 317.

¹⁶ Wang in fact became Yu Liansan's most trusted adviser. noting, Yu "took my advice in everything." See Wang Xianqian, *Kuiyuan zi ding nianpu* [Wang Xianqian's chronology written by Wang himself], vol II, p. 92. Cited in Lewis, p. 147.

¹⁷ Wang Xianqian, "Fu Bi Yongnian"([Reply to Bi Yongnian) in *Xushoutang shuzha* [Wang Xianqian's correspondence] (1932), vol. 1, p.33a and "Gongshang lun" (On industry and commerce), in *Xushoutang wenji* [Anthology of Xushou Hall], (1932) vol. 1, p. 10a. Cited in Luo Zhitian, "Sixiang guannian yu shehui jiaose de cuowei: Wuxu qianhuo Hunan xinjiu zhi zheng zai si – cezhong Wang Xianqian and Ye Dehui" (Misplaced ideology and social roles: The conflict between the old and the new in Hunan both before and after the 1898 Reform Movement), *Lishi yanjiu* [Historical Research], No. 5 1998, p. 59.

province.¹⁸ He also introduced mathematics and English into the Yuelu Academy's curriculum following Jiang Biao's reform at Jiaojing Academy. He praised *Shiwu Bao*, edited by Liang Qichao, and even put it on the required reading list for his students. On his initiative the School of Current Affairs was established and Liang Qichao and a group of Kang's disciples were invited to teach at the school.¹⁹ He turned against the radical reform ideology only when he felt that reform threatened the Confucian central social-ethical values, namely, the three cardinal bands and the five ethical principles in human relationships and imperial polity.

During the Xinzheng period, Wang retained his previous "conservative" stance; at the same time he was the leading figure in promoting local economic construction, which was at that time strongly associated with nationalism and patriotism. He was the leader in the movements for the recovery of mining rights and the Canton-Hankou Railway rights. He did not oppose Western learning. When Wang was appointed director of *Hunan Shifan guan* [Hunan Normal College], a new style school established in 1903, he employed Japanese teachers in mathematics and science.²⁰ He also encouraged Hunan's study-in-Japan programme, as can be seen in a letter he sent to Governor Cen Chunxuan, in which he called for students in Japan to translate at night the textbooks and lecture notes they had been taught in the daytime, because these translations could then be used immediately as teaching material for schools in China, or published in journals and magazines in order to bring about wider influence. In this way, he pointed out optimistically that "that one person studying abroad is indeed equal to ten thousand people studying abroad."²¹ Furthermore, he was enthusiastic in the promotion of provincial vocational education and popular literacy.²²

¹⁸ When Zeng Jize, son of Zeng Guofan, transported his father's coffin by steamship into his Hunan hometown in 1871, it became a sensational event, a prompting angry attack from a group of celebrated Hunanese gentry-literati, because the thing itself implied both approval of Western technology and contempt for Chinese tradition.

¹⁹ Chinese translation of Onogawa Hidemi, *Studies in the political thoughts of late Ch'ing*, p. 198.

²⁰ Zhang Pengyuan, *Xindaihua quyu de yanjiu – Hunan sheng*, p. 177-8.

²¹ Cited in Zhang Pengyuan, *Xindaihua quyu de yanjiu – Hunan sheng*, p. 184-5.

²² Yuzhe huizun [御折汇存], Yu Liansan's memorial of May 6, 1902, cited in Zhang Pengyuan, *Xindaihua quyu de yanjiu – Hunan sheng*, p. 179. *Dongfang zaizhi* [The East Miscellany] no. 6, vol. 5 1908.

Therefore we can see that Wang and gentry of his conservative kind were in fact very open to new things and Western learning. They took the lead in promoting China's educational, economic and social transformation, while at the same time they saw themselves as guardians of the basic values and beliefs of Chinese civilization, just as their predecessors, Mencius and Han Yu had fought against heresy. In this light we may call conservatism of his kind "enlightened" or "open-minded" or "moral-ideological" conservatism that differs from that adhered to by the extreme kind of conservative who refused any reform even if China were to perish.²³

Only one school, namely the Academy of Seeking for Reality, the former School of Current Affairs, was included in Governor Yu Liansan's plan of conversion into a modern school at the provincial capital. The prestigious Yuelu Academy and other leading academies such as Chengnan at Changsha remained untouched. This may have been due to the opposition of Wang Xianqian, because, when in 1903 Zhao Erxun, appointed as governor of Hunan to replace Yu, attempted to speed up Hunan's education reform, his project, including the conversion and re-construction of Yuelu Academy and Chengnan Academy at Changsha into a provincial college (省城高等学堂 *shengcheng gaodeng xuetang*), met with strenuous protest from Wang Xianqian and Liu Caijiu, heads of the Yuelu and the Chengnan academies (商战 *shanzhang*) respectively.²⁴ However, Zhao was vigorous in carrying out the governmental educational reform programme in Hunan. Unlike Yu, who took Wang's advice in everything, Zhao ordered the Yuelu Academy to be changed into a provincial college, and the former provincial college was changed into a school of agriculture, industry, commerce and mining (农工商矿实业学堂 *Nong gong shang kuang shiye xuetang*).²⁵ An emphasis on modern subjects was evident in the new curriculum including history, English, geography, geometry, trigonometry, biology, physiology, physics, chemistry, law, drawing and physical education in addition to the traditional subjects of self-cultivation and the Confucian classics.

²³ For the nature of Hunanese conservatives see Hao Chang's "Intellectual change and reform, 1890-8" and Lewis. The conservatism of the Confucian gentry-literati in Hunan in particular, and in modern China in general, remains an under-studied subject.

²⁴ Wang Xianqian, *Kuiyuan ziding nianpu* [A Chronological autobiography of Wang Xianqian], vol. II, p. 91b.

²⁵ *Yuzhe huicun* [collection of imperial edicts and memorials], the 29th of the tenth month of the twenty-ninth year of Guangxu reign (1903).

However, Wang didn't give up. In 1904 a conventional academy entitled Yuelu Jingxian Tang [岳麓景贤堂 Yuelu Hall of Respect for Worthies] was set up in order to continue the heritage of the Yuelu Academy and the traditional Chinese education system in both form and content. He disapproved of the hectic rhythm of the new school with its ringing bells, because he didn't believe that students could enter a state of calmness and concentrate their minds immediately after such ringing. Thus he argued for traditional ways of studying which trained students in calmness and concentration first and then to study without interruption.²⁶ Thus, education in Hunan manifested a very intricate situation in which the so-called "conservative" (旧派 *jiupai* or 守旧 *shoujiu*) Hunanese elite played a double role: they were the driving force behind part of the educational reform programme, while simultaneously forming the main resistance to the transformation into a modern education system.

In this entangled and complicated situation, Hunan's study-in-Japan plan was worked out. According to the imperial decree Hunan established Xuewu chu (学务处) or the Provincial Bureau of Education in June 1902, placing it in charge of all provincial educational affairs, including the selection and sending of students overseas. Apart from the establishment of a teacher training school (师范馆 *shifan guan*) as the first step of the transformation of academies into new style schools, another substantial measure was the sending of students to Japan. The first group to undertake government-sponsored study in Japan consisted of twelve mature students, four of whom were *juren* degree holders while the others were either "bachelors" (秀才 *xiuca*) or *shengyuan* (生员 students of Imperial College or local government Confucian schools who were qualified candidates for provincial examination leading to the *juren* degree). They took six month accelerated courses of teacher training (速成师范科 *sucheng shifan ke*) in order to meet the urgent need for new style schools in Hunan.²⁷ Although the training they received in Japan was short and brief, some of them, such as Hu Yuantan (胡元谈 1872-1940) and Yu Gaoqing (俞浩庆) did become influential figures in the process of Hunan's educational transformation soon after

²⁶ Lu Yuanding's memorial "Zou xianshen jianli Yuelu Jingxian Tang zhe" in *Eastern Miscellany*, ce 6, juan 2, no.4, p. 3764. For Wang's dislike of the new school's ringing bells see his *Xushoutang wenji* [Collected writings from the studio of pure reception], 1.15a-b. Cited in Charles Lewis, p. 148.

²⁷ *Hunan jinbainian dashi jishu*, p. 177.

they returned home in 1902.²⁸ At the same time two groups of small numbers of self-sponsored Hunanese students left for Japan.²⁹

The second group of government students to Japan consisted of fifty students, who had been selected from the failed candidates of provincial examinations in the autumn of 1902.³⁰ Yang Changji was one of them. Among those with whom he travelled were Chen Tianhua (陈天华 1875-1905), Liu Kuiyi (刘揆一 1878-1950) and Shi Taojun (石陶钧 1880-1948) who later became prominent figures in China's modern revolutionary movement. Yang Changji was the eldest at thirty-two; the youngest, Liang Huanting (梁焕庭), the younger brother of Liang Huankui (梁焕奎 1868-1929), the organiser and supervisor of the group, was only twelve. Liang Huankui, at that time the secretary of the Hunan Xuewu Chu or the provincial "Bureau of Education," and the initiator and organizer of the group. He had early been actively involved in Chen Baozhen's reform programme.³¹ His other brother Liang Huanyi had been sent by Hunan's government to Japan in 1901 to learn mining engineering.³² At the request of Liang Huankui, Yang Changji became the teacher of his twelve-year-old brother, and Yang Changji and Liang Huankui became close friends after then. In the summer of 1918 when Yang moved to Beijing to teach

²⁸ Hu Yuantan was greatly impressed with Fukuzawa Yukichi's educational thought and methods. Along with another Japan returned student and two Hunan gentry-scholars, he established the Mingde school, the first new style private school in Hunan, with the strong support of such influential provincial gentry as Long Zhanlin and Tan Yankai. Yu Gaoqing was appointed as educational commissioner or supervisor of education for the Changsha area by Hunan Governor Duan Fang in the spring of 1905.

²⁹ "Yuzhe huicun", "Yu Liansan pian" (Memorial submitted by Yu Liansan), 15th March, the twenty-eighth year of Guangxu reign (1902). Cited in Zhang Pengyuan, *Xindaihua qiyu de yanjiu - Hunan sheng*, p. 183.

³⁰ The number of the second group of Hunanese students to go to Japan varies in different sources. For instance, Zhu Deshang's "Diary of 1903" (published in *Hunan lishi ziliao*, no. 1, 1979) reports a total of thirty-five students. Based on *Hunan Guanbao* [Hunan government gazette] in 1902 the editor examined the figure and corrected some mistakes in a footnote. Accordingly, there was a total of fifty students on this journey to Japan. Zhang Pengyuan's study of the modernization of Hunan province between 1860 and 1916 shows only twenty-four students. (p. 183). However Zhang didn't provide the source of information. Zhu's "Diary" as a personal record is very likely incomplete. The editor's account seems the most reliable one. Shi Taojun, "Liushinian de wo" (jielu) (My sixty-year life) (selected), *Hunan lishi ziliao*, no. 2, 1981, pp. 21-2.

³¹ When Chen Baozhen submitted a memorial to ask government approval for the establishment of Hunan's Bureau of Mining in October 1895, Liang was appointed as the secretary (wen'an). See Liang Shuming, "Fan Zhang Xingyan xianshen tanhua ji" (Record of an interview with Mr Zhang Shizhao), *Hunan lishi ziliao*, no. 1 (Changsha: 1980) pp. 163-4. The complete version of the article was published in *Zhuanji wenxue* [Biographical literature] 55.3 (Taipei: September 1989): 102-3.

³² Hunan jinbainian dashi jishu, p. 178. They later established the Huachang company of stibine ore smeltery.

Western ethics at Beijing University, he befriended Liang Shumin thanks to Liang Huankui's introduction.³³

Before departure for Japan, the provincial Bureau of Education held a farewell banquet on 21st February 1903. During the banquet, Yang Du (杨度 1875-1917), *juren* of 1897, who had just completed a six-month course at Kōbun Institute, delivered a speech which reflected very well the attitude of Chinese students towards study in Japan.³⁴ Having pointed out that China was on the verge of national extinction because of the foreign powers' policy of an "influence sphere," Yang Du claimed that China's fate relied on self-salvation, and self-salvation depended on "students." Believing that the world's future depended on "students" he cited the well-known Prussian general Helmuth C. B. von Moltke's (1800-1891) remark "today's victory [over France] should be attributed to the efforts of our students" in order to support his point. However, Yang's usage of "student" has another implication, that is, his approach to save China through education and the promotion of knowledge (学问救国 *xuewen jiuguo*). Yang Du was not the only one to advocate an educational and intellectualistic approach; what made his approach different from that of others was his notion of "knowledge" (学问 *xuewen*). He held "natural science (自然科学 *ziran kexue*) to be the core of science. Natural science is to science as Mahayana (the Great vehicle) is to Buddhism." Luo Zhengjun, director of the Hunan Bureau of Education, gave only a two-line speech, saying that "you have to regard learning from the island country (namely, Japan) as a plan. We should respect Japan only for her knowledge (学问 *xuewen*), and not for her culture." Luo's speech provides the best example of the real feeling and intentions behind study in Japan.³⁵ As Paula Harrell points out, "From the China side, the objective was not to learn about Japan, but to learn about the West through Japan."³⁶

³³ Liang Shumin, original name Liang Huandin, was a distant relative of Liang Huankui. Their great grandfathers were brothers. See Liang Shumin, "Fang Zhang Xinyan xianshen tanhua ji" and *Liang Shumin wenda lu* (Interviews with Liang Shumin), cited in *Bujin de sinian – Mingren yi Mao Zedong* [The endless reminiscence: celebrities' memories of Mao Zedong] (1992), p. 64-5.

³⁴ L. Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China* (1986), IV, pp.13-4. Yang Du was not included in the first Hunan government-sponsored study in Japan in 1902. It seemed that he financed his trip to Japan. His younger brother Yang Zheng was included in the second group of students in Japan. See Zhu Deshang's "Diary of 1903," p. 207.

³⁵ For the farewell party and Yang Du's address see Zhu Deshang's "Diary of 1903."

³⁶ Paula Harrell, *Sowing the seeds of change*, p. 81.

The group set off from Changsha on 3rd March 1903. Shortly before leaving for Japan, Yang changed his name from Changji to Huaizhong “yearning for China” in order to indicate his loyalty to the motherland. As for his motivation for studying in Japan he later asserted,

I had set my heart on devoting myself to education since my capping ceremony (弱冠 *ruoguan*) [at the age of twenty]. At a time when China was experiencing a great change because of contacts with foreign countries, everyone was trying to make suggestions for reform and self-strengthening. Concrete measures included the application of Japanese and Western political institution and the establishment of new-style schools in order to achieve universal education. I believe, in such a situation, one would not be able to take on the responsibility of guiding the society without having world knowledge (世界知识 *shijie zhishi*). On this ground I sailed abroad to pursue my studies.³⁷

The strong desire to acquire “world knowledge” in order to be able to take the burden of providing guidance to society demonstrates clearly Yang’s profound sense of the vocation of a Confucian “superior man”: inner sagehood and outer kingship. The superior man can achieve complete self-realization only through participation in the enterprise of ordering and harmonizing the world, which meant in concrete terms the attainment of public service. Thus, the superior man regards taking political and cultural leadership as his own vocation. The traditional approach to self-realization – “honouring moral nature” (存德性 *cun dexing*) and “following the path of inquiry and study” (道问学 *dao wenxue*) remained valid for Yang, the problem was that new elements needed to be added. Now he seemed to be blessed with times propitious for the preparation of the public employment of his talents. His lofty ambitions and great ideals were enunciated incisively in a poem written on the way to Japan in the tower of Yueyang made famous by Fan Zhongyan’s (989-1052) aphorism “the scholar should put the fate of the country and the suffering of common people above any individual desire and happiness.”³⁸

All over the land when the dragon is striving,
At a time when hidden heroes emerge.
For 10,000 *li* my feelings were destitute

³⁷ Yang Changji, “Yu guiguo hou duiyu jiaoyu zhi cuo gan” [Some thoughts on education after returning to China], (1913) in *Wenji*, p. 52.

³⁸ See chapter 1, p.3 n6.

My thoughts sweep over 100 years.
The sun and moon are always illuminated,
Who can control the rivers and hills?
I climb the tower and look into the far distance
Who can know my great ambitions?³⁹

It is interesting to compare Yang's poem with that of Wu Yuzhang (1878-1966), a student from Sichuan province and later a leading member of the Chinese Communist Party and educator. He went to Japan around the same time and like Yang was married with children. In addition to the theme of his personal ambition to seek measures which would increase China's wealth and power, Wu's poem is full of a profound feeling of sorrowful parting.⁴⁰ But for Yang there is only the heroic theme. His determination to go abroad was driven partly by his profound sense of the mission of the Confucian superior man (君子 *junzi*) and also by the popular idea that studying abroad was a direct way of saving the nation.

³⁹ This poem written on 8th March 1903 when Yang visited Yueyang Pavilion with four fellow students. Zhu Deshang seen in commented, "its tremendous momentum and artistic conception could be compared with that Tan Sitong's poems." See Zhu Deshang, p. 214.

⁴⁰ Wu Yuzhang, *Xinhai geming* [The 1911 Revolution], Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1961, p. 29.

Chapter 5

Yang and the Hunanese students in Japan

After a journey of twenty-four days the second group of Hunanese students sent by the provincial government arrived in Tokyo on 27th March 1903, a year that witnessed the speeding up of the flow of Chinese students in Japan.¹

Matching Eastwards

As Marius Jansen points out, the Chinese student movement to Japan in the first decade of the twentieth century was probably the largest mass movement of study abroad in world history.² According to one source, 247 Chinese students were in Japan in 1901, 608 in 1902, and 1300 in 1903, and the figure almost doubled in 1904 (2,400). The Chinese student movement to Japan reached its height in the period 1905-7 (8,000, 12,000 and 10,000 respectively).³ According to incomplete statistics for the period of 1902-3, about 67 percent were aged seventeen to twenty-five and

¹ They sailed off from Changsha and stopped at Yuezhou, Wuchang, and Shanghai, where they changed onto a Japanese ship named 博爱丸 and set off on 20 March 1903, arriving at Shimonoseki on 22nd March. In another two days they reached Kōbe and arrived at Tokyo via Yokohama on the evening of 27th March. See Zhu Deshang's "Diaries of 1903" for details.

² Marius Jansen, "Japan and the Chinese revolution 1911," *Late Ch'ing*, vol. 11, p. 348.

³ Li Xisuo, "Xinhai geming qian de liuri xuesheng yundong" (The Chinese student movement in Japan before the 1911 Revolution) (1983), pp. 606-7. Li's table "Chinese students in Japan, 1896-1912" draws on various sources including documents of the education ministry, newspapers, magazines and collections of memorials. However, the figures of Chinese students in Japan vary in different surveys. According to Shu Xincheng's study of Chinese sources, Chinese students in Japan totalled around ten thousand. But a Japanese source, cited by Shu elsewhere in the same chapter, shows that the number of Chinese students was just more than seven thousand. See his *Jindai Zhongguo liuxue shi* [A history of Chinese students abroad in modern times], Shanghai, Zhonghua, 1929, p. 55, 70. Paula Harrell's statistics, based on Sanetō Keishū, suggest that by 1905-6, between 8,000 and 9,000 Chinese were studying in Tokyo. Elsewhere in the book, according to an article published in March 1906 in *North China Herald*, Chinese students accounted for 8,620. See Paula Harrell, pp. 2, 72-3. See also Ding Wengjiang's article named "Chinese students" published in *Westminster Review* in Jan 1908, in which he estimated that there were over thirteen hundred Chinese students at the height of the Chinese student movement to Japan by 1905-6. A more convenient table is provided by Reynolds. He reproduces three sets of figures respectively by Sanetō, Futami and Satō, and Li Xisuo in a Table named "Chinese students in Japan, 1896-1914". See his *Xinzheng revolution and Japan*, p. 48. Regardless of which figures are accepted, the trend is clear that the years 1905-7 saw the largest number of Chinese students in Japan.

most of the rest (20 percent) in their late twenties. Only 8 percent were thirty or over. And 5 percent were under seventeen, including some as young as six or seven.⁴

Of the 1903 roster of Hunanese students the youngest was twelve, while the eldest was forty-six. The group aged between 17 to 25 accounted for 60 percent of the total (113 out of 191), the group of late twenties for 15 percent (31 out of 191), while 40 students aged thirty or over made up about 21 percent.⁵ In comparison with the general survey, the percentage of the group who were thirty and over in the Hunan roster is much higher than that of the group of thirty and over in the general survey. This implies that more mature Hunanese students than average came to Japan in the incipient stage of the Chinese student movement to Japan.

37 percent of the Hunanese students were government-sponsored. However, this does not mean that all these Hunanese students received grants from Hunan's provincial government; some of them had studied at academies in other provinces and thus were sponsored by the provincial government where the academy was located. Huang Xing is an example. He was a student at the Academy of Hunan and Hubei in Wuchang (两湖书院 Liang Hu shuyuan) and was awarded a Hubei provincial government scholarship for teacher training in Japan in 1902.

42 percent of the Hunanese students were involved in military studies and training. The majority of the other students enrolled in the liberal arts and teacher training at Kōbun Academy including Yang Changji.⁶ This distribution of subjects reflected clearly the shift of Chinese interest in Western culture. With most students unable to speak any Japanese, Kōbun Academy provided interpreters in the classrooms. It is possible that, by the time he left for Japan, Yang Changji may have already acquired a rudimentary knowledge of the Japanese language, because during the journey to

⁴ Fang Zhaoying, *Qingmo Minchu yangxue xuesheng timing lu chuj* [Preliminary listing of students abroad in the late Qing-early Republican period]. Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1962 (reprinted), cited in Paula Harrell, pp. 62, 235n.3. Ages are given for only 616 out of 663 students.

⁵ The survey is based on "Hunan tongxiang liuxue Riben timing" (The List of Hunanese Students in Japan), *Youxue yibian*, no. 10 (September 6 1903): 1043-1055, and no. 12 (November 3 1903): 1413-4. The closing date of the list was September 1903. 198 names, including five who died in the Independent Society's uprising of 1900 and two age unknown, were on the roster.

⁶ 29 out of the total of 198 students, were not marked with school names, and 12 out of the 198 students enrolled in the preparatory school. For the source see *ibid.* 65 out of 198 entered the Kōbun Academy.

Japan he and Zhu Deshang decided to translate Japanese textbooks once they arrived in Japan.

Recent studies have shown that the driving force behind the formation of China's large-scale study-abroad programme came from the Japanese side. The expansion of Japanese interests on the Asian mainland was the main thrust of Meiji foreign policy, as part of the pan-Asianist dream associated with Japan's burning concerns over national security within Asia and her desire for rapid economic development. Two overlapping groups formed the main forces for the promotion of Sino-Japanese cooperation in the period before the Sino-Japanese war: *yūshi*, participants of organizations with special interest in China and Asia, and *shishi*, superpatriots. In the first category were members of the House of Peers, Meiji government officials, key members of political parties and journalist-intellectuals, while people in the second category included soldiers, business-promoters, adventurers and hustlers. Among their associations and societies the Kō-A Kai (Revive Asia Society, founded in Tokyo 1880) and Tōhōkyōkai (Oriental Association) were the most important and influential. After the Sino-Japanese war the belief of a leadership role in Asia for Japan was greatly inflated. Two themes - "Asia for the Asians" and "common culture," implying, politically, a Japan-led bloc allied against the inroad of the Western countries, and culturally, a Japanese answer to the "white man's burden" – gained currency. Japan, for its own sake, regarded the offering of assistance to China's education reform as its own responsibility. Kanō Jigorō is a typical example. He took the promoting of China's modern education as his own "yellow man's burden" as can be seen clearly both in his speeches and lectures to Chinese students and in his efforts to establish the Kōbun Academy.⁷

Kanō Jigorō and his Kōbun Academy played a decisive role in the establishment of China's study-in-Japan programme. Kanō, entrusted by Japanese Minister of Education Saionji Kimmochi, arranged study and lodging for the first group of thirteen Chinese students in Japan in 1896. A three-year course scheme tailored to

⁷ *Zhina jiaoyu wenti* [On China's educational problem] in *Xinmin congbao*, no. 23, 24 (Dec. 1902, Jan. 1903). For a discussion of the origin of the study-in-Japan programme from the Japanese side see Paula Harrell, esp. pp. 6, 9, 12-14, 19-23, 29-39.

the Chinese needs was provided with qualified teachers. In 1899 it produced seven graduates at the level of a Japanese middle school education.⁸

In 1902, Kanō made a three-month trip to China financed by the Japanese Foreign Office. From July to October he visited Beijing, Tianjin, and other major cities including Chansha, and met such powerful governor-generals as Zhang Zhidong and Liu Kunyi as well as many members of provincial elite groups. All this enabled Kanō to form a relatively comprehensive view of the state of China's education system and special needs on which his Kōbun schemes drew to a large extent. Kōbun Academy offered not only short-term accelerated courses (速成科 *suchengke*) in special fields such as teacher and police training, but also a three-year regular course (普通科 *putongke*) in the standard curriculum of modern Japanese schools, because Kanō argued for formal education from the consideration of long-termed development. Kōbun Academy attracted a large number of Chinese students. 7192 Chinese students, of whom 3810 had received diplomas, enrolled at Kōbun Academy until its closure in July 1909. Among its many famous graduates were the leader of the 1911 revolution Huang Xing, the co-founder of the Chinese Communist Party Chen Duxiu, and the modern literary giant Lu Xun. It is no wonder that the Kōbun Academy won its nickname of the "Flagship of Chinese Education in Japan."⁹

Student as an independent organised political force

1903 also witnessed a series of student movements of protest against the foreign powers for interfering in China's affairs and in China's national sovereignty, and against the Manchu government for its incapability in a time of crisis. This marked one of the most distinct aspects of Chinese student movement in Japan.

With the mushrooming number of Chinese students in Japan, various associations were set up.¹⁰ It is interesting to note that the "study society"(学会 *xuehui*) which had

⁸ Reynolds, p. 50.

⁹ See Paula Harrell's and Reynolds' books.

¹⁰ The organizations and associations of Chinese students in Japan remains a under-studied subject. Li Xisuo admits that distinguishing the individual natures of these organizations is a very hard job, because their memberships were so variable. He divides student organizations into three types according to their main inclinations: (1) associations with an academic purpose (学习团体 *xuexi tuanti*); (2) patriotic associations (爱国团体 *Aiguo tuanti*); (3) Anti-Qing revolutionary groups and secret societies. The first category includes Tiyu hui (体育会 *Sports society*), Lizhi hui (立志会 *Society for encouragement of aspiration*), Bianyi she 编译社 *Compilation and Translation Society*) etc.

played a very important role in the Reform movement from 1895-1898 stepped down from the stage. Instead, “Tongxianghui” (同乡会 native-place association) became one of the most popular and influential student organizations. “The association of fellow provincial students” was not an innovation, but a copy of the “Huiguan” (会馆, hometown association). Not only did every province set up provincial associations at the capital city, even counties also established “Association for fellowmen of hometown.” We don’t know yet when the custom started, but it was one of the most common kinds of associations in the late Qing.¹¹ For example, in the spring of 1896 when Liang Qichao and Tan Sitong were in Beijing, Liang stayed in Xinhui guan, (新惠馆) while Tan lodged in Liuyang guan (浏阳馆). They saw each other almost every day to exchange ideas and argue about various problems, academic as well as political.¹² Nanhai huiguan (南海会馆) in Beijing, founded by the donations of native Nanhai county officials in the capital, was Kang Youwei’s usual lodging and the place where he launched the sensational mass petition of examination candidates (公车上书 *gongche shangshu*) which urged the court to repudiate the humiliating peace treaty with Japan at Shimonoseki and initiate reform and also where he drafted his reform programme to be submitted to the throne in May 1895. During the entire period of the 1898 Reform movement, Kang dwelled in Nanhai huiguan where he proposed various reform measures to the court. Thus Nanhai huiguan served as headquarters for the reform movement.¹³

The second includes Native-place associations (同乡会 *tongxiang hui*), Voluntary anti-Russia Corps (拒俄义勇队 *Ju E yiyong dui*), Red Cross (赤十字社 *Chi shizi she*), Society for Hunan’s and Hubei’s railways (Liang Hu tielu hui) etc. The third kind of organizations included Youth Society (青年会 *Qingnian hui*), Association of universal love (共爱会 *Gongai hui*), Association for National military education (军国民教育会 *Junguomin jiaoyu hui*), the Association of Illumination of Ming Dynasty (明明会 *Mingming hui*), The Hongmen Triad (洪门三合会 *Hongmeng Sanhe hui*) in Yokohama. The defects of Li’s division are clear. “Patriotic” is a general term which all groups and organizations possessed. Scholarly attention to Chinese student organizations in Japan has been confined to a narrow scope of certain “revolutionary” groups. A comprehensive study of Chinese students in Japan and the West from the point of view of the most striking and unique phenomena in the modern history of China, and its significance and contributions to China’s transformation in other aspects in addition to the revolutionary one, is still waiting to be written.

¹¹ Aiming to strengthen connections between provincial fellowmen the “Huiguan” provided a gathering place and accommodation for provincial students, or examination candidates, or officials or anyone who had business. The “Huiguan” had their own administration and structure.

¹² Liang Qichao, “Sanshi zishu” (Autobiographic account at the age of thirty) and “Wangyou Xia Huiqing xiansheng” (My deceased friend Xia Zengyou), *Yinbingshi wenji* [Collection of writings of “drinking-ice” studio], vol. 11, se 4, p. 17; and vol. 44, se 15, pp. 18-24.

¹³ Luo Xuecun, “Wangshi ruyan xiying cun – Beijing Kang Youwei guju xunji” (往事如烟昔影存 – 北京康有为故居巡礼 Past events and surviving old haunts: a visit to Kang Youwei’s former residence

The Hunanese student association in Japan, as the first one of this kind, was established by Huang Xing, Yang Du, Yang Yulin and others. around the autumn of 1902. The meetings were usually held at Yang Du's house. Thereby Yang Du's house gained the nickname of "Hunan huiguan" (The rendezvous of Hunan association) or "Liuri xuesheng julebu" (the club of Hunanese students returned from Japan). In the spring of the following year, students from Hubei, Zhejiang and Jiangsu established their own associations.¹⁴ Although the "provincial association" was not an innovation, its functions and roles in the student movement in Japan and in the modern history of Chinese revolution go far beyond the primary intention of forming cordial relationship between fellow provincial students and strengthening students' provincial ties. Some of these student provincial associations were set up with the intention of serving as a stepping stone towards national unity since an organization at national level could be realized only through building on smaller units of cooperation.¹⁵

Furthermore, these student provincial associations played a decisive role in organizing and mobilizing students; for instance, the investigation and protest against an offensive exhibit concerning Chinese people at the Races of Man pavilion at the Osaka Exhibition and the anti-Russian movement both of which took place in 1903. The climax of the student movement in Japan was marked by a protest in 1905 against "Regulations regarding public and private schools admitting Chinese students". Students accused the Qing government of cooperating with the imperialistic discrimination of the Japanese government. More importantly, many early revolutionary groups as important as the Huaxing Hui (Society for China's revival) and the Guangfu Hui (Restoration Society) were formed on the same basis as the provincial associations.

in Beijing), in *People's Daily* (overseas version), 1998. For a modern study of Chinese "huiguan" see B. Goodman, *Native Place, City and Nation*, Berkeley, 1995.

¹⁴ Peng Guoxing, "Huaxing Hui jige wenti de yanjiu" (Inquiry into some questions about the Society for China's Revival), pp. 676-7.

¹⁵ Michael Gasster, "The republican revolutionary movement," *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 11, pt II, p. 477.

What made these new provincial associations different from the old ones were the journals they published.¹⁶ Carrying on the tradition, which had started in the Reform movement of 1898, of using the press as an instrument of propaganda, the journals became a forum of free speaking in which students poured out their patriotic emotions as well as daring and fierce indictment of political maladies, abuse of the Qing government, and the introduction of various new and revolutionary ideas. Anti-imperialism, anti-Manchuism and nationalism were the dominant topics. It is said that Sun Yat-sen asserted that three categories of persons made outstanding contributions to the 1911 Revolution: overseas Chinese, overseas Chinese students, and the party (Tongmenghui). Overseas Chinese contributed money, the students prepared ideology and agitated for revolution, and the party contributed strength.¹⁷ In fact, the contribution of overseas students went far beyond what Sun confirmed, for the majority of revolutionary leaders and leading figures emerged from their numbers. Furthermore, many of the great names, such as Huang Xing, Chen Tianhua, Yang Yulin, Song Jiaoren and Liu Kuiyi, in fact came from Hunan. In spite of their strong provincialism, the provincial associations played an important role in developing intellectual ferment and in assembling dispersed forces for a large-scale political movement in Japan prior to the emergence of revolutionary groups and organization at national level during the period between 1903 and 1905.

The journal published by Hunanese students entitled *Youxue yibian* or *Study abroad and Translation* was founded by Huang Xing, Yang Yulin and Chen Fan, an owner of the famous *Su Bao*, and five other Hunanese students.¹⁸ Yang Yulin was editor-in-chief. Soon after the publication of the first issue of the journal on November 14 1902, the same group of Hunanese students founded the Hunan Bianyishe or “Hunan Compilation and Translation Press” with the intention of translating and publishing

¹⁶ On the beginning of a political press and journals in the 1890s and after see Hao Chang, “Intellectual Change and Reform, 1890-8,” in Cambridge History of China, vol. 11, pp. 293-4. See also J. Judge, *Print and Politics*, Stanford, 1996.

¹⁷ Reynolds, p. 41. Reynolds cited in Li Xicuo's *Jindai Zhongguo de liuxuesheng* (Beijing, 1987), p. 168; see also p. 195.

¹⁸ The five other students were Xu Zhi, Tao Xingxiao, Li Zhenduo, Wei Zhaowen and Zhang Xiaozhun, see the first issue of *Hubei Xueshengjie* [Hubei Students Circles]. Chen Fan, a Hunanese, took sides with the reformist group in 1898 when he served as a district magistrate in Jiangxi province. In the same year he bought *Su bao*, a newspaper founded in 1896 at the Japanese concession in Shanghai. In November 1902, Chen made a trip to Japan, where, along with other seven Hunanese

books referring to politics, law, engineering and technology, and textbooks in order to meet the urgent and heavy demand of the home province. The two merged and the Hunan Compilation and Translation Press took charge of the journal after the second issue.¹⁹ In roughly one year, forty-one academic books, including well-known works such as Spencer's *On Education*, John Stuart Mill's *Liberty*, Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, Samuel Smiles' *Self-help*, Ukita Kazutami's *The principles of history*, and Inoue Tetsujirō's *The relation between ethics and religion* were translated, mainly from Japanese.²⁰ More than thirty textbooks for primary school and teacher books were also published.²¹

The Hunan students' journal sought to "introduce civilization" (输入文明 *shuru wenming*) and "increase the knowledge of the people" (增益民智 *zengyi minzhi*), slogans which had been the main theme of Hunan's 1897-8 reform movement. Therefore, promoting scholarship and education were seen as being of primary importance as asserted by Yang Du in the "introduction" to the journal. This was different from *Translation and Compilation* (译书汇编 *Yishu huibian*), established two years prior to *Study abroad and Translation*, which emphasised the translation of complete versions of famous theoretical books. Translations from current Japanese papers, lecture notes, and extracts from books featured largely in the journal of *Study abroad and Translation*. After issues 8 and 9, however, the volume of original writings increased. In the last two issues (no. 11 and no. 12) translation became insignificant, the majority of articles now being original writings.

The contents of the journal covered a wide range of topics as can be seen from the different sections which included science and learning (学术 *xueshu*), education, military science, finance and management, current affairs, history, geography,

students, he founded the Hunan Translation Society. See Ge Gongzheng, *Zhongguo paokanshi*, [A history of modern Chinese journals and newspapers], pp. 153-162, cited in Paula Harrell, p. 148.

¹⁹ A commonly accepted statement about the Hunan Compilation and Translation Press and the journal *Study abroad and Translation* is that the publishing house was established prior to the publication of *Youxue yibian*. For instance, Ge Gongzheng's *Zhongguo baokan shi* [A history of Chinese journals and newspapers] is one of the most important sources of information. But it is incorrect, please see the "Note of editorial board" and "General regulations of *Youxue yibian*," no. 2, pp. 110-1. Therefore I feel that it is necessary to provide a brief account in order to clear up the historical facts.

²⁰ "Translations published by Hunan Society for Translation" (Appendix 2), in Huang Fuqing, pp. 262-3.

²¹ The estimate is based on advertisements published in *Youxue yibian*.

extracts of foreign papers, correspondence and fiction. Yang Changji published his “Dahuazhai riji” [Diary of Dahua studio] and “Jiaoyu fanlun” [A general discussion of education] in issues 8 and 9 respectively, three months after he arrived in Japan.²²

The most important Hunanese association at Kōbun Academy, prior to the establishment of the Huaxing hui or “Society for China’s rise”, was Tuyaoahui (土曜会) or “Saturday Society.” General meetings took place every Saturday, at which students exchanged ideas about China’s politics and argued about ways and means of ensuring China’s survival. The political nature of the society was obvious. Huang Xing was always the key speaker, displaying for the first time his leadership talent and advocating the saving of China through military action and education. Shi Taojun, one of the first group of Hunanese students in Japan, decided to pursue military studies at Shinbu School, a preparatory school for the Army Officer School (Rikugun Shikan Gakkō).²³

Anti- Russian and Anti-Manchu revolutionary activities

Although there is no convincing evidence of Yang’s attendance at the Saturday Society, he was involved in the student’s anti-Russia movement in April and May of 1903.²⁴ During the Boxer uprising, Russia had sent troops across the border and occupied Manchuria. Although Russia had signed a treaty on the 8th April 1902 for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Manchuria in a three-stage process over six months, when the deadline for the second stage, 8th April 1903, came and went, there was no sign of any further withdrawal. Instead, Russia transferred her troops from Chinese cities to the barracks along the Chinese Eastern Railway. The action indicated nothing other than a buildup of Russian military forces in Manchuria. Towards the end of April, Russia’s continued occupation of China’s “Three Eastern Provinces” with the intention of merging them into the map of Russia was openly expressed in a statement known as the “Seven Demands” made by the Russian chargé d’affaires in Beijing.

²² For a detailed discussion of Yang’s diaries and article see chapter 3.

²³ Shi Taojun, “Liushinian de wo” (My sixty-year life) pp. 24-5. Shinbu School was established as a military preparatory school especially for Chinese students in the agreement between Chinese and Japanese government. For details see Shu Xincheng, *Jindai Zhongguo liuxue shi*, pp. 56-64.

²⁴ For Yang Changji’s anticipation see Li Xiaodan, “Yang Huaizhong xianshen yishi,” *Wenji*, p. 387.

All these events provoked a series of protests in April and May by patriotic Chinese students, teachers, merchants and gentry in China and students in Japan. The first meeting, attended by around fifty students, was held on the morning on 29th April organized by Student Union leaders and representatives of the Youth Society and provincial associations. Tang Erhe, a student from Zhejiang and Niu Yongjian, from Jiangsu, were the principal speakers. Niu called for action rather than talk. One decision of the morning meeting was to create a new group committed specifically to providing resistance to Russia.

This initiative was fully discussed in a five-hour section of the general meeting held in the same day's afternoon at Kinki Hall in Kanda. Despite the short notice, some 500 students attended. Students' anti-Russia efforts were not confined as they had previously been to sending telegrams to the Qing authorities and other student associations at home with the desire of exerting their influence through public opinion; a student army named Ju E yiyong dui or "Voluntary corps of resistance against Russia" was established. It consisted of a headquarters with five subordinate sections and four units, each consisting of four sections. The purpose of the Volunteer Corps was to join with the national army to fight against Russia, because students had discovered that the Qing government had refused the "Seven Demands" and they felt that a war between China and Russia would inevitably result. On the 6th May the first, and last, military drill was held. Because of a warning from the Japanese government and pressure from the Qing government, the student army was disbanded, becoming instead a form of "military affairs discussion society."

The "Association for National Military Education" (军国民教育会 Junguomin jiaoyu hui) was established on 11th May 1903. Students still cherished high hopes that the authority would respond favourably to the students' patriotic anti-Russia operation. Two student representatives were sent to Tianjin to meet Yuan Shikai on 14th May. They stayed around two months there but Yuan refused to see them in spite of their repeated requests. Meanwhile the Qing government's reaction shifted from exhortations to study to suppression. On the 5th June a government edict ordering the arrest and execution of returned students suspected of revolutionary inclinations

appeared in *Su Bao*. All of these events directed an anti-Russia movement toward an anti-Manchu revolution.²⁵

Although Hunanese students were not the initiates of the anti-Russia movement, some of them including Huang Xing, Yang Yulin, Chen Tianhua and Su Peng (苏鹏), became the core of the Association for National Military Education. The association expanded its operations out of Japan with the explicit objective of expelling the Manchus from power. The three main measures they took, as Feng Ziyu summarized, were agitation, organization of rebellion and assassination. Huang Xing returned to Hunan in the summer of 1903, establishing the Huaxing hui, or “China Rise Society” in November in order to organise uprisings. Yang Yulin, in charge of assassination operations, remained in Japan.

As shown in chapter 3, Yang Yulin was an activist in the Hunan’s reform movement of 1897 and was in favour of Liang Qichao and other radical reformists’ ideas and measures. In order to avoid political persecution after the collapse of the reform movement of 1898, he stayed in the countryside for a couple of months and in the following year went to Jiangsu province, where he became a teacher at a private school founded by Long Zhanglin, an eminent reform-minded Hunanese Gentry-Official. In 1902, sponsored by Long, Yulin accompanied by some of his students, sailed to Japan.²⁶

Yang Yulin studied Japanese at Seika School, and, after a short period of study at Kōbun Academy, he then enrolled at Waseda University to study politics and law.²⁷ At the beginning, like most of his contemporaries who believed in the intellectualistic and educational approach, he plunged into the translation of Japanese books, translating three Japanese works of politics and philosophy in one year.²⁸ Including Takebe Tongo’s *Zhexue daguan* [A general outline of philosophy] which

²⁵ For details of the anti-Russia movement see Yang Tianshi and Wang Xuezhuan, *Ju E yundong* [Anti-Russia Movement] Beijing, 1979. For a recent detailed account in English see Paula Harrell, pp. 131-144.

²⁶ Cao Yabo, *Wuchang geming zhengshi* [A true history of the 1911 revolution], pp. 368-9.

²⁷ Yang Changji, “Daohai leishi Yangjun Shouren shilüe” (A brief biography of Martyr Yang Shouren), *Jiayin zazhi* (Tiger magazine), 1.4 (1914):2. Most accounts of Yang Yulin’s life, apart from Yang Changji’s leave out the fact that Yang studied at Seika School.

²⁸ They are Ukita Kazutami’s *Shixue yuanlun* [The principles of history], Takebe Tongo’s *Zhexue daguan* [A general outline of philosophy] and *Zhengzhixue dagang* [A general outline of politics]. The author of the last book is unknown.

became an important source from which Yang Changji was exposed to its comparative studies of the characteristics and differences between the Chinese, Indian, Japanese and Western philosophical traditions.²⁹

Yang Yulin was one of the few Chinese of that time to have precise and systematic knowledge of Western political history and government. He may have gleaned this knowledge partly from his short period of study in politics and law at Waseda, and partly from his intensive reading. The trends of Russian anarchist and populist thought in Japan were instrumental to Yulin becoming a leading anarchist of the first generation in China.³⁰ He abandoned his study at Waseda University, choosing instead to go to Yokohama where he became expert in making explosives under the instruction of Mr Liang Muguan. Although he lost the sight of one eye in an accident, Yulin didn't give up his experiments, as he believed that terrorist measures were the quickest and most effective way to overthrow the Manchus, and bombs were more effective than hand guns.³¹ In the following two years (1904-1906) it is thought that he organized two assassinations including the famous assassination of five ministers and Wu Yue's (1878-1905) death in September 1905.³²

Yang Yulin's political radicalism and revolutionary anti-Manchuism were expressed mainly in his agitating pamphlet *New Hunan*, which called for the promotion of nationalism in order to oppose foreign imperialist aggression and to expel the Manchu rulers.³³ In *New Hunan* Yulin pointed out emphatically that *minzu jianguo zhuyi* (民族建国主义, nationalism, or lit. construction of a state based on nationalism) and *geren quanli zhuyi* (个人权利主义 individual rights) were two substantial

²⁹ In the summer of 1914 Yang Changji re-read Yulin's manuscript of translation. He presumably intended to publish it. See Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), entries of 1 June, 5 and 6 July, pp. 37, 49, 50. Yang copied down what he thought to be the essential parts in his diaries.

³⁰ See his *New Hunan*, which contained sections on Russian populism and violent revolution. For the influence of Russian anarchism and populism on Yang Yulin and on the early republic revolutionary movement see Tan Bi'an, "Eguo mincui zhuyi dui Tongmeng hui de yingxiang" (The influence of Russian populism on the Revolutionary Alliance), *Lishi yanjiu*, no. 1 (1959), 38-42, and also Martin Bernal, "The Triumph of anarchism over Marxism, 1906-1907," *China in revolution: The first phase, 1900-1913*, (1968) pp. 97-142, esp. pp. 116-123.

³¹ See Yang Yulin (Dusheng)'s *New Hunan*, chapter 5 "Destruction" (破坏 *pohuai*), pp. 637-642.

³² Cao Yabo, *Wuchang geming zhenshi*, pp. 366-375.

³³ *New Hunan* was reprinted in August because of heavy demand. See the advertisement of the reprint of *New Hunan* in issue no. 9 (Aug. 7 1903), p. 951. Zhang Nan and Wang Renzhi provide a very brief account of the description of the edition of *New Hunan*, but the exact date of the first edition remains unknown.

principles under which Western modern states had emerged. And they should be regarded as universal principles required for China's transformation into a modern independent nation-state capable of standing up among the other nation-states in the world. He also introduced the notion of state sovereignty (主权 *zhuquan*) to China shortly before Liang Qichao's discussion of the concept.³⁴ However, it is interesting to note that his interpretation of state sovereignty did not point out the two most essential features – i.e. that it should be absolute and unlimited – of the supreme legislative power possessed by every independent nation-state. Instead, he associated it with Montesquieu's theory of the separation of powers and with the liberal democratic tradition from Locke to Rousseau which emphasized that public spirit was the precondition for democratic government and that sovereignty belongs only to the people.³⁵ Using the traditional Chinese approach of substance/function, he wrote, "taking the entire citizen as substance, and the Three-powers – legislative, judicial, and administrative – as its function," he then argued that "the survival or demise of a state depended on the existence of sovereignty possessed by the whole citizenship (全体之主权 *quanti zhi zhuquan*), and not on the rise and fall of government."³⁶ Differentiation of state from government was crucial for him to argue further for revolutionary anti-Manchuism through the advocacy of nationalism.

For Yulin there was no any conflict between the interests and rights of individual and those of the state, because he embraced fully Rousseau's political philosophy and believed that the formation of a community (群 *qun*) or a state was based on a social contract (民约 *minyue*), aimed at the protection of an individual's rights to equality and freedom, and the realisation of universal hope and happiness (诸人之希望和幸福 *zhuren zhi xiwan he xingfu*). State and society were just like a company in which people were owner and shareholder (股东 *gudong*), while government functioned only as a steward or a manager (司事 *sishi*). National sovereignty represented a collective form of an individual's rights. If an individual's rights were harmed,

³⁴ Liang made reference to "sovereignty" in his article entitled "Zhengzhixue dajia Bulunzhili zhi xueshuo" (The theory of Bluntschli, a great political thinker), *Xinmin congbao*, (Oct. 4 1903), no. 38-9.

³⁵ For Locke's, Montesquieu's and Rousseau's political thought relating to sovereignty, government and state, see George H. Sabine, *A history of political theory* (1956), 451-3, 461, 465-7, 471-3, 494-9. For the origin of the idea of sovereignty and its modern meaning see Dennis Lloyd, *The idea of Law*, Penguin Books Ltd (1979), esp. chapter 8.

³⁶ Yang Yulin, *New Hunan*, p. 634-5.

national sovereignty was damaged as well. Nationalism had an extreme power of cohesion (凝合亲和力 *ninghe qinhe li*) which could be used to resist imperialism and to create a democratic nation in which individual's rights could be fully achieved.³⁷ We find that Yang Changji shared this view with Yang Yulin.³⁸

In *New Hunan*, Yang Yulin put forward a distinctive theory of the middle class through a combination of Western class analysis and Confucian elitism. This idea had a profound influence on Yang Changji, as is evident in Yang's repeated citations of the idea in articles he published after his return to China.³⁹ Furthermore, *New Hunan* explored a number of highly influential themes, such as distinguishing government from state, advocating provincial independence and self-determination, challenging the influential and time-honoured ideas and values of the "great unity" (大一统 *da yitong*), the destruction of the old order by means of violent measures, and the notion of a middle class society. Unfortunately, Yang Yulin's *New Hunan* and his thought have received less attention from modern scholars than Zou Rong's *Revolutionary Army* or the writings of Chen Tianhua.

The idea of provincial self-government, featuring Chinese nationalism and anti-imperialism, was one of the most important trends of political thought in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Yang Yulin's *New Hunan* seems to have contained the earliest open call for Hunan's independence, in the context of two other pairs of themes: anti-imperialism and nationalism, and anti-Manchuism and republicanism.

As an echo, an anonymous article entitled "Hunan zizhi lun" (On Hunan's independence and self-government) was published in the last issue of *Youxue yibian* in December 1903. One of the differences between the two works was that *New Hunan* emphasized anti-Manchuism, "destruction" (破坏 *pohuai*) and revolutionary

³⁷ Ibid, pp. 632-3.

³⁸ For Yang Changji's views of individual's rights and relationship between individual and society see chapter 3 of this study. His individualism will be discussed in chapter 8.

³⁹ Yang Yulin's theory of classes has attracted attention from some scholars of modern history of the Chinese revolution, for example, J. W. Esherick's *Reform and Revolution in China: the 1911 revolution in Hunan and Hubei* and Martin Bernal's "Triumph of Anarchism over Marxism" and Charlton Lewis' *Prologue to the Chinese Revolution*. However, there is still no systematic study. For Yang Changji's notion of the "middle class" see his "Ji Yingguo jiaoyu zhi qingxing" [Notes on British education] in *Hunan Jiaoyu zazhi* [Hunan education magazine], no. 13, 14 (1913), "Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi" [Education and Politics] *Hunan Jiaoyu zaizhi* no. 16 (1913). And also *Yang Changji riji*

actions, while the latter offered more concrete suggestions through providing a detailed plan of the representative system and structure of local governments at all levels (prefecture, county, and village).

However, both shared one core argument regarding the relationship between the individual and society or citizen and government, that is, the individual's independence and autonomy in opposition to the concept of slavishness as the foundation of a society; the independence and autonomy of a province thus formed the basis of national independence and autonomy. Both advocated the value of individualism in the sense of Western nineteenth-century liberalism.

While Yang Yulin asserted that the recognition of individual rights (个人权利主义 *geren quanli zhuyi*) and freedom was a necessary precondition of the establishment of a state based on nationalist principle (民族建国主义 *minzu jianguo zhuyi*), the author of "On Hunan's independence and self-government" proclaimed that the attainment of individual autonomy (个人自治 *geren zizhi*) was the departure point for carrying forward self-government from village (乡 *xiang*), county, prefecture (府 *fu* or 州 *zhou*) to provinces and finally to achieve China's sovereignty as a independent nation among the other nations in the world. "This individual autonomy is not only understood in the sense of what Sung Confucianism meant by self-cultivation with an emphasis on self-restriction and self-discipline (束身寡过 *shushen guaguo*), but also denotes an increasing knowledge which could shape an enterprising spirit (进取精神 *jinqu jingshen*)."⁴⁰ Such notions of individual autonomy and individualism, as shown in chapter 3, lie very close to Yang Changji's version.

The heritage of the movement in Hunan for self-government that was initiated by Yang Yulin became one of the most important sources from which Mao Zedong came to advocate Hunan's self-government movement in 1920. Mao's exposure to this Hunanese tradition is evident in an article published in September 1920, in

[Diary of Yang Changji], entry of September 28 1914, p. 88-9. For a detailed discussion see chapter 7 of this study.

⁴⁰ "Hunan zizhi lun" in *Youxue yibian*, no. 12 (Dec. 1903), p. 1228 (orig. p. 4).

which he cited Yang Changji's idea of making plans for the part rather than for the whole as one of his essential arguments for Hunan's self-government.⁴¹

Yang Changji was one of around five hundred students who attended a general meeting of Chinese students held on April 29 1903 to protest Russian's military occupation of Manchuria. He actively participated in the students' anti-Russian efforts. According to one source he even signed up for the Voluntary Corps, although he didn't take part in the military drill of May 6. He told his friends, "I thought that I was not a person who could be skilled in destruction. Furthermore, I have established the desire to devote my entire life to study and knowledge, so I cannot join the army."⁴² If we compare the number of those who signed up for the army with the total of Chinese students in Japan, Yang's attitude seems to have been typical of a large number of students.⁴³

While the failure of the uprising of the Independent Society led by Tang Caichang in 1900 awakened anti-Manchu sentiment among a small group of early revolutionaries, such as Qing Lishang, Zhang Bingling and Bi Yongnian, the anti-Russian movement of 1903 marked a significant turning-point in the emergence of the Chinese overseas student's anti-Manchuism and support for republican revolution. Revolutionary groups based on provincial regions emerged around the autumn of 1903. Among them the Huaxing Hui (Society for China's rise) organised by a group of Hunanese students, and the Guangfu hui (Restoration Society) organised by Zhejiangese students, were the most important. There is no source that suggests Yang Changji's involvement in any of these radical and revolutionary organizations, but he was a close friend of such revolutionary pioneers as Huang Xing, Chen Tianhua, Yang Yulin and Zhang Shizhao (1881-1973).⁴⁴

⁴¹ Mao Zedong, "Dapo meiyou jichu de da Zhongguo jianshe xuduo de Zhongguo cong Hunan zuoqi" (Break down the foundationless big China and build up many Chinas starting with Hunan) in September 5 1920 issue, *Dagong bao* (Hunan). Mao wrote, "My teacher Mr. Yang Huaizhong once said: "It is better to make plans not for the whole but for the part; not at the top but at the bottom." For an English translation see *Mao's road to Power*, vol. 1, p. 547. Yang formulated the idea in "Diary of Dahua zhai, 1903" published first in issue 8 of *Youxue yibian*.

⁴² Li Xiaodan, "Yang Changji xiansheng yishi," *Wenji*, p. 378.

⁴³ According to a list published by *Su Bao* in the issue of 18 May, the "Student Army" had around 150 soldiers and headquarters staff; around 800 Chinese students in Tokyo at the time were involved in the anti-Russia effort.

⁴⁴ "Huang Xing zhi Zhang Shizhao, Wu Ruonan xinza" (Correspondence of Huang Xing to Zhang Shizhao and Wu Ruonan), *Hunan lishi ziliao* [Hunan historical materials], no. 1 (1981) p. 6.

However, according to a reliable source, Yang and his other Hunanese friends had formed the China Study Society (中国学会 Zhongguo Xuehui) in Tokyo. Its members including Yang Du, Zhou Dalie (周大烈), Fang Biao (方表), Xiong Chongxu (熊崇煦) and Yang Shuda (杨树达), who later became a noted scholar of classic Confucianism. All of them came from Hunan. This society was founded before Yang Du's League of Constitutionals (宪政公会 xianzheng gonghui) in Waseda, a political rival of Liang Qichao's Political Information of Institute (政闻社 Zhengwen she) which was established in October 1907 in Tokyo.⁴⁵ Between 1905 and 1907 Chinese students societies in Japan witnessed multileveled ideological split. In the summer of 1905 the Revolutionary Alliance (同盟会 Tongmeng hui) was established. The disagreement between those in favour of a revolutionary approach to establish a republican China and those inclined towards a constitutional monarchical China led to an eruption of open debate in the pages of Liang Qichao's *New Citizen* (新民丛报 *xinmin congbao*) and *People's Report* (民报 *minbao*), the journal of the Revolutionary Alliance. While the Hunanese student's Huaxing Hui led by Huang Xing and Song Jiaoren made a coalition with Sun Ya-tsen, Yang Du refused to join in, for he disapproved of a revolutionary approach and advocated constitutional monarchy. At the same time that he opposed the Qing government that had made him, he also declined Liang Qichao's suggestion of working together in order to form a unitary party that would promote a movement for constitutional reform. He started another organisation, the League of Constitutionals.⁴⁶ Yang Changji remained on friendly terms with Yang Du, although Yang Changji generally kept himself aloof from political activities.⁴⁷ Saving China through an intellectual-educational approach was his consistent commitment, although he also supported the republican ideal.

Wu was the first wife of Zhang Shizhao. For Yang's friendship with Chen Tianhua, see Li Xiaodan, "Yang Huaizhong xiansheng yishi," *Wenji*, p. 378.

⁴⁵ Li Xiaodan, "Yang Huaizhong xiansheng yishi", *Wenji*, p.379. Li was a Hunanese student in Japan during the period 1904 and 1911.

⁴⁶ In 1906 Yang Du published *China New Daily* (中国新报 Zhongguo xinbao) in 1906 and in 1907 he merged the Society for a Survey of Government and People (政肃调查会 Zhengsu diaocha hui) and the Seminar on Constitution (宪政讲习所 Xianzheng jiangxi suo) into the League of Constitutionals (宪政公会 Xianzheng gonghui) in Tokyo in 1907. See Huang Fu-Ch'ing, *Chinese Students in Japan in the late Ch'ing period*, (trans. K. Whitaker) Tokyo: 1982, pp. 197-9, and H.L Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, (1968) vol. 4, pp. 14-5.

⁴⁷ Li Xiaodan, "Yang Huaizhong xiansheng yishi", *Wenji*, p.379.

Study life

Amidst this revolutionary ferment, however, Yang Changji did not swerve from either his desire for world knowledge or his commitment to an intellectualistic and educational approach. After the anti-Russian movement he withdrew himself from the Chinese students' political activities to concentrate on his studies. He took an accelerated intensive course in teacher training (速成师范科 *suchengshifan ke*), and then enrolled on a three-year regular course (普通科 *putongke*), because he found that the curriculum of the short course was too rudimentary and brief to fit his ambition to acquire world knowledge. Unlike the short-term intensive course which was taught in the classroom for mature students by an interpreter, the three-year regular course was designed for younger Chinese students to prepare them for higher education in Japan. The course offered the standard curriculum of modern Japanese middle schools.⁴⁸ The curriculum below may give an idea of what Yang learnt there. The emphasis of the first year course was on Japanese-language study, supplemented by introductory classes in history, mathematics, ethics, and physical education. In the secondary year, besides continuing the subjects of the first year, geometry, algebra, chemistry, drawing and English were taught. The third year course was optional depending on categories chosen by the students.⁴⁹ Yang studied a range of subjects including ethics, Japanese, history, trigonometry, zoology, botany, drawing, English and physical education.

According to a source that Yang had achieved distinguished scores in every subjects during a three-year period of the study at Kōbun Academy.⁵⁰ With Kanō's encouragement Yang continued studying in the English department at Tokyo Kōtō Shihan Gakkō or "Tokyo Higher Normal School" headed by Kanō Jigorō.⁵¹ The diaries and subjects of Yang's translation after his returning to home indicate that Yang had been systematically trained in Western educational psychology, pedagogy, philosophy and ethics, and world history. The training was important for Yang in his

⁴⁸ Reynolds' account of a two-track system of training provided by Kōbun Academy is based on Abe Hiroshi's *Chūgoju no kindai kyōiku to Meiji Nihon* [Chinese modern education and Meiji Japan]. See Reynolds, p. 50.

⁴⁹ For a detailed account of Kōbun Academy's three-year course scheme see Paula Harrell, p. 70.

⁵⁰ Li Xiaodan, "Benxiao gu jiaoshou Yang Huaizhong xiansheng shiji," *Beijing daxue rikan* [Beijing University Daily] January 28 1920.

⁵¹ Yang Changji, "Yu Guiguo huo duiyu jiaoyu zhi cuogan"(1913), *Wenji*, p. 58.

future study at Aberdeen. It is worth noting that advanced classical Chinese, including *Guoce* [sic] [战国策 *Strategy of Warring States*] and *Shiji* [史记 *Historical records*] were also taught.⁵²

Among his Japanese teachers Kanō was the one who left the greatest influence on Yang's thought. Before Yang sailed to Japan, he had been exposed to Kanō's thought through reading "Zhina jiaoyu wenti" (On China's educational problem), a record of two speeches given by Kanō to the first group of Hunanese graduates and of two conversations between Kanō and Yang Du and a few other students, serialized by *Xinmin congbao* in December 1902, and published almost simultaneously in pamphlet form by Hunan Compilation and Translation Press.⁵³ Yang Changji recommended it highly to his companions during the journey to Japan.⁵⁴

Yang was not interested in Kanō's pan-Asianist discourse such as "Japanese and Chinese should help and support each other in order to resist Western encroachment." On the contrary, he was always alert to Japanese aggressive ambitions.⁵⁵ However he was a admirer of Kanō's educational thought which maintained that development of moral character (德育 *deyu*), intellectual education (智育 *zhiyu*) and physical strength (体育 *tiyu*) were an integrated principle and target of education. Kanō provided a relatively long account of the relations between these three elements in "On China's educational problem". He also criticized China's lack of military ethos (尚武 *shangwu*), pointing out that it was one of the root causes of China's weakness. That became the source of inspiration for Yang to formulate his educational thought which emphasised both physical and mental strength (身心并重 *shenxin bingzhong*), a very different concept from traditional Confucian thought.

The influence can be seen in Yang's writings regarding school education, his teaching practice in Hunan and even his personal life style. For him, physical

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ *Xinmin congbao*, (Tokyo) 23 (December 30 1902): 105-120; 24 (January 13 1903):91-116. For the book form see the advertisement of *Zhina jiaoyu wenti* (On China's educational problem) in issue 3 of *Youxue yibian* (January 13 1903): 281.

⁵⁴ Zhu Deshang, p. 213.

⁵⁵ Yang Changji wrote in his diary of 24 June 1914, "When I was in the history lecture at Tokyo Higher Normal School, the teacher said, that like the Romans, Chinese love their culture more than anything else. If the foreign intruders did not damage their culture, the Chinese would accept them without worry. But I thought that the Japanese harboured evil intentions to succeed the Manchus in occupying China." *Yang Changji riji*, p. 47.

strength became one of the principal aims of education, associated with the measure of achievement of the strength of the whole nation. The starting point towards this aim was the individual himself. After returning to Hunan, he insisted on taking a cold bath and doing drill every day. He wanted to set a personal example for his students, not only in terms of moral character but also with regard to physical strength. Thus the influence was not confined to educational thought, but also extended to Yang's outlook. While Yang gained a nickname of the "Confucius of Changsha," he transformed the conventional image of thin and weak Confucian literati. The young Mao was among a group of students exposed profoundly to their teacher's idea of promoting physical and mental strength. A respect for an active life and the military ethos was one of the main strands of Mao Zedong's thought in his youth and, indeed, remained so throughout his life.⁵⁶ In 1914 Yang also copied Kanō's newly published secondary school textbook "Self-cultivation."

Yoshida Seichi (吉田静致 1872-1945), a prolific writer on Western ethics, is another teacher to whom Yang owed much of his perception of Western moral philosophy and its tradition.⁵⁷ His lecture notes were translated later by Yang to be used as teaching material when he taught self-cultivation at the First Normal School, Changsha in the academic year 1916-7. In the recently published *Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao 1912-1920* (1990) Mao's "Marginal notes to: Friedrich Paulsen, *A System of Ethics*" revealed that he copied Yang's translation of Yoshida's "Xiyang lunlixue shi" [Lecture notes of a history of Western ethics] by hand.⁵⁸

These lecture notes were also taught at Beijing University in the academic year 1918-9 when Yang was appointed by chancellor Cai Yuanpei as professor in Western ethics. According to Yang's diary, he began the translation in July 1915. During the

⁵⁶ Mao learned about cold baths from Yang. Under Yang's influence Mao wrote a pair of essays, one of which entitled "Xin zhi li" (The power of the mind), for which he received a mark of 100. The other was "Lun tiyu" or "A study of physical education." Due to Yang's recommendation the latter was published in *Xin Qingnian* [New youth] in 1917. The essay "Power of the mind" is lost. For a modern study of Mao's "A study of physical education" see Stuart R. Schram's "Introduction" to the French translation *Une Étude de l'éducation physique*, Mouton, Paris, 1962.

⁵⁷ *Mao's road to power*, p. 585 n11.

⁵⁸ Luo Xuezan, a intimate friend and classmate of Mao Zedong, wrote in his diary, "I borrowed Mao Zedong's hand copy of "Xiyang lunlixue shi" including seven notebooks. I started reading at the end of June (Chinese calendar), and I have just finished." See Luo Xuezan's diary of 26 September 1917, cited in *Hunan Diyi Shifan xiaoshi* [A history of the first normal school, Hunan] (Shanghai, 1983), p. 97.

May Fourth Movement in 1919, Yang also singled out what he considered to be the core values of Western individualism and liberalism, publishing them in *Minduo* [People's Bell], one of the most influential scholarly journals at that time.⁵⁹ The translation in book form, which appeared probably around the turn of 1919, was soon sold out. The second edition was reprinted by Beijing University Press in the autumn of 1920 after Yang's death. Hu Shi wrote a "preface," in which he remarked that high quality "treatises on the history of American and European ethics are really rare. There are a couple of pieces in English, but they are neither detailed nor comprehensive. The present book provides an account of the development of modern ethics in great detail. It is a great pity that the book ends with Spencer; however it can, in the end, be regarded as a very useful reference book."⁶⁰ The book was also distributed by the Cultural Book Society (文化书社 Wenhua shushe) founded in Changsha by Mao Zedong.⁶¹ It is the most popular and influential of all Yang's translations of Western ethics.

In Japan, Yang also encountered the works of original thinkers and educators of the Japanese intellectual Enlightenment during the Meiji reform movement, such as Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834-1901) and Yoshida Shōin. Yang praised both highly as models who did not seek fame and official career, but instead, dedicated their entire lives to education.⁶² Fukuzawa's stories and ideas about relationships between individuals and society became one of the strongest arguments for Yang's advocacy of the idea of the individual's independence.⁶³

Even in Japan Yang carried on his studies of Confucianism and also encouraged other young Chinese students to study Confucianism. That made him very different

⁵⁹ Yang Changji, "Xiyang lunlixue shi zhi zhailu (Extracts of the essence of *A History of Western Ethics*), *Minduo* [People's Bell] (Shanghai), no. 6 1919. It is reprinted in *Wenji*, pp.356-362. For a detailed discussion see chapter 5.

⁶⁰ Hu Shi, "Ba" [Preface] to *A History of Western ethics*

⁶¹ Mao Zedong's "Faqi Wenhua shushe" (The founding of the Cultural Book Society), *Dagong bao* (Changsha), 31 July 1920, and "Wenhua shushe diyici yingye baogao" (The first Business report of the Cultural Book Society), *Hunan tongshu bao*, 6, 10, 11 November 1920. They are reprinted in *Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao, 1912 6-1920 11* [Mao Zedong's writings in the early years, from June 1912 to November 1920], pp.498-9; 535-540. For English translations see *Mao's road to power*, pp. 534-5 and pp. 583-7.

⁶² Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi" (Education and politics), *Hunan jiaoyu zazhi* [Educational magazine, Hunan], no. 16, 1913, reprinted in *Wenji*, see p. 45.

⁶³ Yang Changji, "Zhisheng pian" (A study of managing livelihood), *New Youth*, 2.4 (1916): 353-360; 2.5 (1917): 451-458. Reprinted in *Wenji* (1983), pp. 229-246.

from such figures as Huang Xing, Yang Yulin, Cheng Tianhua, Wu Yuzhang and many other revolutionary students. Yang Changji called his former students and younger fellow colleagues in Japan together to instruct them in Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism.⁶⁴ According to Guo Zhiqi's recollection, Yang highlighted the most important paragraphs in *Mingru xue'an* [The case studies of the Confucian scholars in the Ming time] and interpreted them sentence by sentence. He also chose Wang Fuzhi's *Du Tongjian lun* [On the General Mirror for Aid in Government] as a supplementary reading, and even asked his students to learn important paragraphs by heart.⁶⁵ His faith in Confucianism was now fuelled also by Japanese scholarship. Koyanagi Shigeta's *Sōgaku Gairon* [A general study of Song Neo-Confucianism] was one Japanese book he highly praised and recommended to his students and fellow colleagues.⁶⁶

It seems very likely that Yang picked up the habit of reading newspapers in Japan. After his return he continued to subscribe to Japanese newspapers *Asahi Shinbun* and *Yomiuri Shinbun*.⁶⁷ In his twenties Yang advocated "reading books without words," by which he meant travelling in order to understand social reality and train personal moral character. In Japan he continued his favourite way of studying living "books" that was one of the distinct characteristics of his life.

⁶⁴ Li Xiaodan, *Xinglu biji* [Reading notes of Xinglu], p. 58.

⁶⁵ Guo Zhiqi, "Huiyi Yang Changji xiansheng" (My recollections of Mr Yang Changji), *Hunan wenshi ziliao xuanji* [The collection of materials regarding Hunan's culture and history] no. 11 (1979), p. 128-9.

⁶⁶ Li Xiaodan, "Benxiao gu jiaoshou Yang Huizhong xiansheng shiji," *Wenji*, p. 375. Li wrote, "when Yang Huaizhong stayed in Japan, he consistently led his students and friends in discourse in his spare time." Yang advised Li "you like to read extensively, but without reading Cheng-Zhu's neo-Confucianism, your scholarship would be like a wood without roots and water without sources." He then recommended Li to read Koyanagi Shigeta's *Sōgaku Gairon*. Koyanagi Shigeta's book remains an influential one for the modern scholars of Chinese philosophy, for instance, Feng Youlan and A. C. Graham cited Koyanagi in *Zhongguo zhaxue shi* and *Two Chinese Philosophers: Metaphysics of the Brothers Ch'eng*. Li Xiaodan (1881-1953), original name Li Youlong, *xiucai* degree of 1898, studied at Kōbun Academy and Waseda University from 1904 to 1911. In 1913 when Liang Qichao was Minister of Judicature and law, he was appointed as Liang's secretary. He was a active journalist for several Beijing newspapers until 1917 when he returned to Hunan to teach Chinese and history of Chinese literature at the Hunan University. See his "Zixu" [A autobiographic account] in *Xinglu biji* and "Editor's notes to reprint *Jinbainian Hunan xuefeng* and *Xiangxue lue*" (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1985).

⁶⁷ Yang Changji, *Riji*, p. 32, 38.

In 1909 he interrupted his study at the Tokyo Higher Normal School and sailed to Britain to start a new study at Aberdeen University where his intellectual journey of seeking world knowledge was going to be continued.

Chapter 6

From East to West

The intellectual and cultural relationship between China and Scotland

Generally speaking, the intellectual and cultural relationship between China and Scotland was mainly one-sided, education being the central point. On the Scottish side, the link with China was part of the overall British Christian evangelistic enterprise and the imperial colonization of China. In the last decades of the nineteenth century the Protestant missionary enterprise directed its central efforts towards professionalization – promoting secular education in terms of the introduction of Western science into China and setting up hospitals and Charity causes in which British missionary societies played a leading part. Alexander Wylie (1815-87), James Legge (1828-1897) and Timothy Richard (1845-1919) were among the notable pioneering missionaries. As Paul Cohen has pointed out, one of the most significant influences on the missionaries was the emergence in coastal areas of a considerable number of pioneering reformist thinkers with Christian connections. These “Christian-connected” pioneers were either Christian or deeply indebted to missionaries for their reformist ideas and views.¹

The history of Chinese students at Scottish universities was tied closely to the whole movement of Chinese study in Europe which was motivated by a strong desire for national wealth and survival. Along with a changed view towards Western culture, sending Chinese students to the West was first considered a significant means of achieving the aforementioned goals by a few enlightened high officials in the 1870s and became widely accepted after the 1898 Reform movement.

¹ Paul Cohen named them “Christian reformers.” The term is misleading. He is plainly aware of this by pointing out that these “Christian reformers” did not draw their reform ideas specifically from Christian precepts and the reform they advocated was definitely not aimed at the future Christianisation of China. Therefore, I use the term “Christian-connected” instead. See Paul Cohen’s “The missionary enterprise in China and its influence since 1900” in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 10, pp. 583-585. For a general understanding of the Christian missionary enterprise in China, see also his other works *China and Christianity: the missionary movement and the growth of Chinese antiforeignism, 1860-1870* (1961) and “Littoral and hinterland in nineteenth-century China: the ‘Christian’ reformers” in *The missionary enterprise in China and America* (1974).

As mentioned above, Chinese studying in Europe sponsored by government dated back as early as 1875. Before the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5) the majority of these young Chinese were students and apprentices of the Fuzhou Naval Dockyard school sent by powerful high-ranking officials, such as Li Hongzhang and Shen Baozhen.² The subjects of study were confined to shipbuilding, engineering, piloting and navigation.

The post-1901 reforms accelerated the government's study abroad programme. The main organisers were viceroys and provincial governors, the Imperial University (京师大学堂 Jingshi daxuetang) and the Southern Public School (南洋公学 Nanyang gongxue).³ The study-in-Europe and America programme reached its first height in 1904, when 139 young Chinese were sent to Belgium, Britain, French, Germany and America including six sent by Zhao Erxun, the governor of Hunan.⁴ This was the first group of students with scholarships from the Hunan government to visit the West. Compared with the period of the self-strengthening movement, the subjects of study were widened. Industry and commerce (实业 *shiye*) were given priority over military training for the first time. Agriculture, industry, mining and commerce were the main study fields set by the government.

² Shu Xincheng, *Jindai Zhongguo liuxue shi*, pp.14-21. The second group of Chinese students in France and England in 1876 was not only significant for the establishment of the modern Chinese navy, but also for China's study-in-Europe programme as Paul Bailey suggests. See his recently published *Strengthen the country and enrich the people: The reform writings of Ma Jianzhong* (1998), p. 33n56. Yan Fu, one of those studying in England, became prominent later through his introduction of Western nineteenth-century evolutionary theories, social Darwinism, and Western liberalism to China. Ma Jianzhong was another one of the famous names of the group of 1876. Ma, a graduate of a French Catholic school in Shanghai, was appointed as a diplomatic attaché to the study-in Europe mission. He, as the first Chinese student, obtained the *bacclauréat* and, in 1879, a Law Diploma. After returning to China, he was a very active member of Li Hongzhang's personal staff (幕府 *mufu*), playing a pioneering role in advocating the so-called "economic nationalism" during the self-strengthening movement. For a recent account of Ma Jianzhong's life and economic-political thought see Paul Bailey's "introduction" to *Strengthen the country and enrich the people: The reform writings of Ma Jianzhong* (1998). Ma Jianzhong left a fundamental influence on the life and thought of Gu Hongming, a graduate of the University of Edinburgh (1877).

³ The Southern Public School was established in 1896 by Sheng Xuanhuai, the director of the Commercial Bureau and the Bureau of telegram in Shanghai and financed by the donation of gentry-merchants of the two bureaus. It consisted of four schools: Normal school (师范院 *shifan yuan*), primary school (外院 *wai yuan*), secondary school (中院 *zhong yuan*) and institute for high education (上院 *shang yuan*). See *Zhongguo jindaishi cidian*, p. 508 and also Cheng Qitian *Jindai Zhongguo jiaoyushi*, p. 93.

⁴ *Zhongguo liuxue shicui* [The essence of history of Chinese studying abroad], p. 278-9.

In 1903, according to Wu Zhihui's recollections and diaries there were five or six Chinese students in England sponsored by the Southern Public School and one sponsored by Tongwen guan (Foreign languages school in Beijing) in London, including Luo Chang in Oxford, (Kang Youwei's son-in-law) and Ding Shiyuan in London, both partisans of the Kang group.⁵ In Scotland, there was only one named Shu Feng (or Suvoong) who was sent by the Jiangnan Arsenal, obtained a M.A degree at Aberdeen in 1900, and then studied medicine there for three years.⁶

The history of Chinese students in Scottish universities can be traced back as far as the 1850s. The medical schools at Edinburgh University and Aberdeen University enjoyed an international reputation which attracted the attention of young Chinese students. Apart from Huang Kuan, known as Wong Fun mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, other graduates in medicine at Scottish universities were He Qi, also known as Ho Kai (1859-1914), at the University of Aberdeen and Lin Wenqing, also known as Lim Boon Keng (1869-1957), at the University of Edinburgh.

The influence of the first generation of these graduates went beyond the scope of their successful medical careers in China; having first acquired specific knowledge for their careers at Scottish universities and then of modern education once they were back in China, it extended to politics, thought and China's modernization.

He Qi who graduated with Bachelor of Medicine and Master of Surgery degree in 1879 in Aberdeen, was one of very few Chinese to become a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England.⁷ In 1882 He Qi obtained the title of Barrister-at-

⁵ Wu Zhihui "Feian kezuo tanhua," *Wu Zhihui quanji* [The complete works of Wu Zhihui], (hereafter *Wu quanji*) vol. 2, pp. 330-1.

⁶ Shu Feng, born 12 Dec 1877 in Shanghai, received M.A in 1900; Bachelor of Medicine (M.B) and Bachelor of Surgery (Ch.B) in 1903 and Diplomat in Public Health and Diplomat of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene of Cambridge in 1904. See the *Roll of Graduates of the University of Aberdeen, 1901-1925*, (1935) p. 915. See also Wu Zhihui, "Feian kezuo tanhua," *Wu quanji*, vol. 2, p. 331.

⁷ *Roll of Graduates of the University of Aberdeen, 1860-1900* (1906) and *Roll of Graduates of the University of Aberdeen, 1901-1925*, (1935). Hereafter *Roll of Graduates*. Zhao Lingyang (Chiu Ling-yeong), "He Qi: Xinhai geming qijian Hong Kong zhi Zhongguo zichan jieji" (Ho Kai: the Hong Kong bourgeoisie during the period of the 1911 Revolution), (1983) p. 2717. Mr Zhao is author of *The life and Thought of Sir Kai Ho* (unpublished PhD. Thesis,) Sydney University, 1968; of "Debate on national salvation: Ho Kai versus Tseng Chi-tse," *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. II (1971):33-51; and of "Ho Kai : A Hong Kong elite, reformer and revolutionary" in *Chu-hai journal*.

law as a graduate of Lincoln's Inn in London.⁸ He later became an eminent figure in Hong Kong's economic, socio-political life and modern medical education. Sun Yat-sen was a graduate of Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese (Hong Kong xi yi xue yuan) founded by He Qi and others in 1887.⁹ He Qi later became a pioneering advocator of a Western-style parliament system in China and an associate to Sun Yat-sen's revolution.¹⁰

Lin Wenqing, a Singapore Chinese, came from a family of Fujian ancestry. He was the first Chinese to win the Queen's Scholarship, which provided him with a chance to receive higher education in Britain. He chose to study medicine at the University of Edinburgh from 1887-1891. During his stay in Britain he met Sun Yat-sen and became an adherent of Sun's Xingzhong hui. After returning, he became a successful doctor, entrepreneur, and public figure in Singapore, and Dean of Amoy University in Fujian province (1921-1937).¹¹

As shown above, although these men came to Britain to study medicine, their career and influence went far beyond medical practice. They became the pioneers of China's political and educational reforms.

Among the first generation of Chinese students at Scottish universities, Gu Hongming (orig. Gu Tangsheng), known as Amoy Ku, was an exception. He was the first Chinese to study liberal arts at a Scottish university and it is very likely that he was the first Chinese arts graduate from a British University. Gu received his M.A. degree from the University of Edinburgh in 1877 at the age of twenty. As the son of a manager of a British-owned rubber plantation in Penang, he was taken to Edinburgh by a Scottish friend of his father named Forbes Scott Brown at about age of ten.¹² Nothing is known about Gu's primary and secondary school education in

⁸ *Roll of Graduates of the University of Aberdeen, 1860-1900* (1906).

⁹ Zhao Lingyang, p. 2716-7.

¹⁰ For the pioneer reformist thinkers of the late Qing and Ho Kai views on political participation see Hao Chang's "Intellectual change and the reform movement, 1890-8," in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 11. Pp. 275-283.

¹¹ Chen Min, "Lin Wenqing" in *Minguo renwu zhuan* [Biographies of eminent figures in the period of Republic China, 1911-1945] (1981) vol 1, pp 387-390. See also H. Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary of the Republican China*, (1973), Vol 2, pp. 386-7

¹² Wu Xiangxiang, "Gu Hongming bijiao zhongguo wenhua" (Gu Hongming's comparative view of Chinese and Western culture), *Minguo bairenzhuan* [Hundred eminent figures in the Republic of China], (Taipei, 1971) vol. 1, p. 356-7. (Hereafter Wu Xiangxian, "Gu Hongming") An English

Edinburgh. According to the university curriculum of the time, subjects studied by Ku would have included Latin, Greek, mathematics, Metaphysics, moral philosophy, natural philosophy, rhetoric, and English literature. He became an admirer of the Scottish essayist and historian Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881). Like Carlyle he respected J. W. von Goethe (1749-1832) as the ultimate representative of European culture. We can see Carlyle's imprint on Gu's thought and idiosyncratic and witty style of writing.¹³

The study of humanity and classics in Edinburgh may have helped to shape Gu as an admirer and defender of traditional and classical culture. In any case study at Edinburgh did provide him with a solid ground on which his critical view of Western culture and his comparative study between Chinese, in particular Confucian, and Western culture later developed. It certainly made him distinct from other Western-trained Chinese scholars of his time.

1880 was a turning point in the thought and life of Gu Hongming. After a three-day meeting with Ma Jianzhong in Singapore he resigned his position in the British colonial government of the Straits Settlements and decided to serve his own country - China.¹⁴

In 1885 when he was recruited into Zhang Zhidong's personal staff, Gu emerged as a fervent adherent of Confucianism and critic of Western culture. During the ensuing years he engaged in a number of polemical disputes with resident European and American missionaries and businessmen through the English papers published in treaty-port cities. Between 1899 and 1904 he published his English translations of the Confucian classics, *Analects* and *Doctrine of the Mean*, because he believed that these two books represented the essential values and spirit of Confucianism and

version of Wu's biographical account of Gu appears in H. Boorman's *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*.

¹³ Other men of letters of whom Gu was in favour included Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) and R. W. Emerson (1803-1882). Lin Yutang's Chinese translation of the famous Danish literary critic Georg Brandes's writing on Gu Hongming with Chinese title "Gu Hongming lun" in *Renjian shi* [The human world], no 12 (Sept. 1934). It is reprinted in *Wentan kuaijie Gu Hongming* [A eccentric genius of literary and learned world: collected articles and essays on Gu Hongming] Changsha: Yuelu, 1988, pp. 239-248. (Hereafter *Wentan guaijie*)

¹⁴ Gu did not seek his Chinese identity only in appearance, by wearing a queue and Chinese clothes, but also in his mind and soul. See Wu Xiangxian "Gu Hongming", p. 360. For a brief biographical account of Ma Jianzhong see footnote 2.

because he wished to introduce Confucianism to the West.¹⁵ He held that Chinese culture, which was based on Confucian ideals of respect for reason and peace, and righteousness and ritual (义 *yi* and 礼 *li*), was more advanced than Western culture which was centred on “mob-worship” and “might-worship.”¹⁶ In his book entitled *The story of a Chinese Oxford Movement*, published one year after Zhang Zhidong’s death, he drew parallels between Cardinal Newman’s fight against “liberalism” and Zhang’s attack against the ever-intensifying encroachment of Western materialistic civilization into China. After the renowned German Sinologist Richard Wilhelm translated it into German, it became required reading for students in philosophy at the University of Göttingen.¹⁷ His trenchant critique of Western values and culture during the First World War was enunciated in his English book *Spirit of the Chinese People* (1915). His critical view of Western culture and introduction of Confucianism attracted international attention among Western scholars and writers.¹⁸

Gu was appointed by Cai Yuanpei (1868-1940) as English professor at the University of Beijing in 1918 making him a colleague of Yang Changji. Although nothing is known about the personal contact between Gu and Yang, a striking similarity can be discerned in their discourses on Confucianism and Western religion and in the argument that Chinese people in traditional China enjoyed more freedom than their counterparts in Western countries.

¹⁵ Wu Xiangxiang, “Gu Hongming,” p. 360.

¹⁶ Gu used “mob-worship” to refer to British popular rights, while “might-worship” referred to German militarism. He held that both were the root cause of the First World War. See Lin Yutang’s Chinese translation of Danish literary critic Georg Morris Brandes’ (1842-1927) article “Gu Hongming lu” (On Gu Hongming’s views), *Wentan guaijie*, p. 243.

¹⁷ Initially, Richard Wilhelm came to China as a German missionary, however, instead of converting Chinese, he himself became a disciple of Confucianism. Like James Legge, he became an internationally known Sinologist through his translations of Confucian classics. His translation of the *Book of Changes* was translated into English, both versions have been regarded as a important source book until today. When he returned to Germany in 1923, he established the China-Institute at Frankfurt University which became the centre for the study of China and Chinese culture in Germany at that time. The translation was entitled *Chinas Verteidigung gegen europäische Ideen: Kritische Aufsätze*, see Wu Xiangxiang, “Gu Hongming” p. 362.

¹⁸ Somerset Maugham, a noted British novelist, visited Gu personally and wrote down his impressions of Gu in *On a Chinese Screen* (1922). Apart from the aforementioned Georg Brandes, Gu also corresponded with the Russian writer A. N. Tolstoy (1882-1945) and met the Indian writer and philosopher R. Tagore (1861-1941) in Beijing. See *Wentan guaijie* (1988). Gu was one of the most intriguing figures in the process of Chinese transformation during the late Qing and early Republican period. His eccentric personality and anecdotes have been much discussed, although his thought remains understudied.

Aberdeen University's connections with China

Aberdeen's cultural connections with China are reflected in both the careers of local graduates of the University who worked in China and Hong Kong, and of Chinese students in Aberdeen. The university's links with China as part of its entire overseas connections, must be seen as a outcome of the imperial expansion of the British empire in Asia from the start of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, China's reluctant opening up to Western penetration after 1840 provided new opportunities for Aberdeen graduates. On the other hand, the establishment of British connections with China was driven by the academic, religious, adventurous, and political interests of individual Aberdeen graduates. This neither reflected official University policy, nor was it the result of any organized efforts, as a recent study has shown.¹⁹ Although Aberdeen University's links with China cannot be compared with its India connections in terms of numbers, the profound influence of graduates of the University on the development of modern China in various ways cannot be underestimated.²⁰

It has been generally overlooked by students and scholars of the modern Chinese history and modern history of cultural relationships between China and Britain that a distinct group of graduates and alumni of the University of Aberdeen played a significant role in the early period of the establishment of Western-styled school system and the development of modern medical education in the coastal areas of China and Hong Kong, and contributed to the promotion of Sinology in British universities.²¹

During the period from 1860 to 1900 a total of fifty Aberdeen graduates worked in China and Hong Kong.²² Over half of these graduates were medically qualified. Two of these served as medical missionaries, in addition to eight clergymen. Another distinctive group were those who held consular appointments in China. Among these

¹⁹ Hargreaves, John D., *Academe and Empire: Some overseas connections of Aberdeen University, 1860-1970* (1993). (Hereafter, *Academe and Empire*)

²⁰ See Table VI "Numbers of graduates employed in overseas areas" and Table VII "Proportion of overseas careers in different regions" in *Academe and Empire*, p. 125.

²¹ See Table VI "Numbers of graduates employed in overseas areas" in J. D. Hargreaves' *Academe and Empire*, p. 125.

²² See John D. Hargreaves, *Academe and Empire: Some overseas connections of Aberdeen University, 1860-1970* (1993), p. 74, where the author provides a table "Aberdeen graduates working in certain Asian countries" based on the *Rolls of graduates*.

eight were two interpreters, the most notable being Sir Alexander Hosie, Consul-General from 1902 until after the Chinese revolution of 1911.²³

Other notable figures included James Legge (1815-1897), a missionary educator and translator of the Confucian classics; Frederick Stewart (1836-1889), the first headmaster of Hong Kong Central School, who was known as the “founder of Hong Kong education;”²⁴ Patrick Manson (1844-1922) the first dean of the College of Medicine for Chinese;²⁵ and James Cantlie (1851-1926), the teacher, supporter and close friend of Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Republic of China.²⁶

²³ In his retirement Alexander Hosie became an expert in Chinese cartography. An unusual employment was taken by Alfred Tingle (BSc 1895) who worked at China's Imperial Mint. See J. D. Hargreaves, p. 74.

²⁴ The idea of improving the Hong Kong educational system was proposed by James Legge in 1860 when he became a member of Hong Kong board of Education. The employment of a Western master of the Central School, who also took the position of Inspector, was entrusted to the three universities: Aberdeen, Edinburgh and London. The reason why these three universities were chosen is not known; however, the Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen played a decisive role in the interview and decision making. See Gillian Bickley, *The golden needle: the biography of Frederick Stewart* (1836-1889). Hong Kong 1997. James Legge was born into a churchman's family in Huntly, Aberdeenshire in 1815. He gained M.A. and Doctor of Divinity at King's college Aberdeen respectively in 1835 and 1842. In 1839 he became involved in the activities of the London Missionary Society in China. See *Dictionary of National Biography*, supplement, III, p.87, and also the *Roll of the Graduates of the University of Aberdeen*. The story of James Legge's translation of Confucian Classics with aid of Wang Tao (1828-1897) is another important chapter of the history of the intellectual and cultural relationship between China and Scotland. For a recent study see Paul Cohen's *Between tradition and modernity: Wang T'ao and reform in late Ch'ing China* (1974). For F. Stewart's life and role in the development of modern education in Hong Kong see Gillian Bickley's *The golden needle*, (1997).

²⁵ Patrick Manson enrolled in the University of Aberdeen in 1860 and graduated with M.B. and C.M. in 1865. In 1866 when he received his M.D. degree at Aberdeen, he was appointed medical officer of Taiwan to the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs through the interest of his elder brother who was already in Shanghai. He left Taiwan in 1871 for Amoy. It was there, while in charge of a missionary society's hospital and dispensary, that he engaged in private medical research that was later to establish his reputation as the “father of tropical medicine.” In December 1883 he arrived in Hong Kong where he played a prominent role in many public projects of importance. He was a co-founder of the College of Medicine for Chinese and became the first dean of the college till 1889. He was teacher and close friend of Sun Yat-sen. In 1896 when Sun was kidnapped by the Chinese legation in London, Manson and James Cantlie were Sun's rescuers. For Patrick Manson's medical achievements see *Dictionary of National Biography, 1922-1930* (Oxford University Press, 1937). For Manson's leading part in developing Hong Kong's modern medical education system see Lindsay Ride, “The Antecedents”, p.6-8, 10-1, 100, 211. For his friendship with Sun Yat-sen and the part he played in rescuing Sun see Sun Yat-sen's *Kidnapped in London* (1897, reprinted by the China Society London, 1969) and Harold Z. Schiffrin's *Sun Yat-sen and the origins of the Chinese Revolution* (1968).

²⁶ James Cantlie graduated with M.A. and M.B. C.M respectively in 1871 and 1873 from Aberdeen. His interest in the study of tropical diseases and his and his wife's strong attachment to China and the Chinese were the main motives for his move to Hong Kong. He was an admirer of Patrick Manson and his successor as Dean of the College of Medicine for Chinese 1889-1897. He left Hong Kong for London in 1896. For his prominent role in the establishment of the College of Medicine see Lindsay Ride; for his leading role in Sun Yat-sen's career and the friendship see

The first Chinese graduate of the University of Aberdeen was He Qi, who chose to study there as a direct result of his missionary family background and their ties with Aberdonian missionaries. He Futang (Ho Fuk Tung), father of He Qi, had been associated with the London Missionary Society in Malacca. In 1843, James Legge, Principal of the Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca, was sent to Hong Kong in order to set up the Anglo-Chinese College (Huaying shuyuan). Ho Fuk Tung accompanied James Legge to Hong Kong and settled down there.²⁷ Ho Kai obtained his primary education at the Hong Kong Central School headed by Frederick Stewart. After completing his secondary education at Palmer House School at Margate in Kent, Ho Kai enrolled for medicine courses at Aberdeen University in September 1875 at the age of 16.²⁸

In addition to promoting the study-in-Japan programme, the Qing government also accelerated the programme of sending Chinese students to Western countries. The number of government-sponsored students in Europe increased rapidly. The Qing government approved Zhang Zhidong and Duan Fan's initiative of sending a "general supervisor for all Chinese students in Europe" in June 1907. Kuai Guangdian was appointed the first general supervisor.²⁹ Yang Yulin was invited by Kuai to be his secretary. Yang accepted the position on the basis that Kuai had given a covert helping hand to certain members of the revolutionary group and because he could set up contact with the student circle in Europe.³⁰ In the spring of 1908 Yang Yulin arrived in London.

Kuai's term was short-lived; because of fierce conflict between him and the students, he resigned the position in 1909. However, his suggestion of appointing supervisors in every European country where there were government-sponsored Chinese students, instead of a general one, was soon accepted by the Chinese education ministry.³¹ Yang Yulin decided to stay in Britain partly because he wanted to study

Schiffrin, p. 21, 29, 31, 35 and chapter 5 "Kidnapped in London." For a sketch of his life see Kenneth Cantlie's "Foreword" to the reprint of Sun Yat-sen's *Kidnapped in London* (1969).

²⁷ Zhao Lingyang, (1983) p. 2716, and Schiffrin, p. 20.

²⁸ *Roll of graduates, 1860-1900*. See also footnote 7 of this chapter.

²⁹ Shu Xincheng, *Jindai Zhongguo liuxue shi*, p. 165.

³⁰ Wu Zhihui, "Yang Shouren zhuanlue" (A brief biography of Yang Yulin), *Wu Zhihui quanji*, [The complete works of Wu Zhihui], vol 16, p. 195.

³¹ Shu Xingcheng, p. 166-7.

chemistry and mechanical engineering in order to improve his knowledge of making explosives and also out of a desire to research Western political systems.³²

Due to Yang Yulin and Zhang Shizhao's recommendation to Kuai, Yang Changji gained a government scholarship to study in Britain. He later revealed to his friend that he regarded studying in Japan (in the East) and in Scotland and Germany (in the West) as the two greatest and most enjoyable events in his life.³³ Acquiring "world knowledge" remained his underlying motivation. Studying in Japan only partly helped to realise it. Yang had started to learn English in 1896, now the opportunity to explore Western culture through first hand experience and materials had arrived. He gave up his study at the Tokyo Higher Normal School and arrived in Britain in March 1909 to join Yang Yulin and Zhang Shizhao in Aberdeen.

Zhang Shizhao, a native of Changsha, Hunan, was a typical example of many Chinese intellectuals of the time who moved from a radical revolutionary attitude to a moderate liberal stance. Born into a family of village gentry, he acquired his classical Chinese learning at a private school where he was taught by his elder brother.³⁴ In 1901, he became an unofficial student at the Liang Hu shuyuan, or "Hunan and Hubei Academy"³⁵ established by Zhang Zhidong. There he got to know Huang Xing, the future co-founder of the Republic of China. The following year he passed the entrance examination with distinction and was admitted to the Military Academy at Nanjing (南京陆师学堂 Nanjing lushi xuetang), because he believed in a militant political approach at that time.³⁶ In the spring of 1903 student opposition to the Russian occupation of Manchuria arose in Shanghai; Zhang led some 30 students from the Nanjing Military Academy to Shanghai where he joined the Patriotic

³² Wu Zhihui, "Yang Shouren Zhuanlüe", p. 195.

³³ Li Xiaodan, *Xinglu biji*, p. 58.

³⁴ According to Wu Xiangxiang, an influential Taiwanese historian of modern Chinese history, Zhang Shizhao was born into a farming family. See his biographical account of Zhang Shizhao in *Bairenzhuan* (Taipei, 1971) vol. 3 pp. 275-291, and its English equivalent in *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China* (Columbia University Press, 1967-70) vol. I. pp. 105-9. However, a later and more reliable account written by Bai Ji'an shows that Zhang Jingzeng, father of Shizhao was head of a *li* (25 households constituted a *li*) and practised Chinese medicine. See Bai Ji'an, "Zhang Shizhao" in *Minguo renwu zhuan*, [The Eminent Chinese of Republican China, 1911-49] vol. 4 (Beijing, 1984). Wu Xiangxiang also mistook Edinburgh for Aberdeen as Zhang's place of study.

³⁵ Zhang Shizhao, "Yu Huang Keqiang xiangjiao shimo" (From the beginning to the end of my association with Huang Xing), *Xinhai geming huiyilu* [Recollections of the 1911 Revolution] vol II, p. 138.

School (爱国学社 Aiguo xueshe) headed by Cai Yuanpei, and staffed and instructed by a group of anti-Manchu revolutionary-minded scholars such as Zhang Binglin (1869-1936) and Wu Zhihui. It was in fact a centre of teaching revolutionary ideas. Zhang Shizhao became a military instructor, and began his political revolutionary career.

In May 1903 Zhang Shizhao became editor in chief of *Su bao* [苏报, or *Jiangsu Newspaper*] and one of its major contributors. Under his editorship *Su bao* adopted an even more openly radical revolutionary tone. During the period of editing *Su bao*, Zhang Shizhao, Zhang Binglin, Zhang Ji (1882-1947) and Zou Rong (1885-1905) became sworn brothers. The publishing of two inflammatory pieces by Zhang Binglin; an article to refute Kang Youwei's views advocating constitutional monarchy and a preface to Zou Rong's pamphlet *Revolutionary Army*, resulted in immediate government suppression, *Su bao* was banned in July. Zhang Binglin was arrested, and Zou Rong gave himself up to the police. Thanks to Yu Mingzheng's protection, Shizhao escaped.³⁷ The government's reaction did not silence the opposition voice. One month later, Zhang Shizhao with Zhang Ji and Chen Duxiu () founded a daily newspaper *Guomin riri bao* [国民日报] or *National People's Daily* to carry on *Su bao*'s tradition. Meanwhile he published an abridged translation of Japanese Miyazaki Toranō's *Thirty-three years' dream* with the Chinese name *Sun Yat-sen*. This stirred up the interest of Chinese students and the intellectual world in Sun Yat-sen, and was important for Chinese students' recognition of Sun's significance and for the facilitation of a revolutionary alliance between Sun and Chinese students in Japan.

Late in 1903 Zhang became involved in preparation for the foundation of the Society for China's Rise. In the spring of 1904, Aiguo xiehui (爱国协会) or "Patriotic Society," one of the peripheral organisations of the Society for China's Rise, was set up in Shanghai with the aim of preparing to support the Changsha uprising of 16

³⁶ Wu Xiangxiang, "Zhang Shizhao chang xinjiu tiaohelun" (Zhang Shizhao's advocacy of a combination between the old and the new), *Bbairren zhuan*, p. 275.

³⁷ As an examiner of Zhang Shizhao's entrance examination of Nanjing Military Academy, Yu Mingzheng appreciated Zhang's talent. For the *Su bao* case, see Zhang Shizhao edited "Su bao jishi." For a modern study in English please see Y. C. Wang's "The Su-pao Case: A study of foreign pressure, intellectual fermentation, and dynastic decline." Paper delivered at Wentworth-by-the-Sea Conference on the 1911 Revolution, Aug. 1965.

December in 1904. Yang Yulin was selected as chairman and Shizhao as vice-chairman. Cai Yuanpei, Chen Duxiu, Cai E (1882-1916) were all members. In December police tracked down the organisation and some ten members, including Zhang Shizhao, Zhang Ji and Huang Xing, were arrested on suspicion of involvement in Wan Fuhua's plot to assassinate the Governor-general of Guangxi province. Thanks to Cai E's rescue Zhang and his colleagues were set free. Zhang left China immediately for Japan.

The Japanese experience of social, economic and political transformation towards modernization was essential in changing Zhang's radical view. Having reflected on his revolutionary career in the past and the solution for China he started to embrace the intellectualistic-educational approach. While his previous colleagues were busy founding Tongmeng hui, he enrolled in the Seisoku School to study English in preparation for studying Western politics in Britain. He was the first of the Chinese students to acknowledge Sun Yat-sen and had joined the first meeting between Huang Xing and Sun in Tokyo. However, he refused to join the Tongmeng hui in spite of repeated appeals from his former colleagues and sworn brothers, Zhang Binglin and Zhang Ji.³⁸ Sponsored by payment for his newly published book he sailed to Britain in 1907, and enrolled in the University of Aberdeen in August in 1909.³⁹

One month later Yang Changji enrolled in the University.⁴⁰ The three Hunanese met again in Aberdeen after a separation in Japan. Together with another Chinese student from Shanghai named Yang Tseng-kao [*sic*] (Yang Zenggao 杨曾诰) who came in Aberdeen in 1908, they constituted the first group of Chinese to study liberal arts at

³⁸ In August 1905 when Tongmeng hui was set up, Zhang Ji urged him to join, but failed. In 1906 when Zhang Binglin was set free from jail and immediately left for Japan, he and Sun Yujun shut Zhang Shizhao in a room for three days. They used both hard and soft tactics to persuade Zhang to join in, however, their efforts were in vain. At that time Zhang Shizhao gave up radical revolutionary measures.

³⁹ Early in 1909 he married Wu Ruonan, the granddaughter of Wu Changqing (1834-84) who was military superior to Yuan Shikai in Korea. Wu and her sister were in the first group of Chinese women students in Japan. She was the first member of Tongmeng hui and was for a time Sun's English secretary. Zhang Shizhao paid his "preliminary examination of Arts fee" on 3rd August 1909. See *Preliminary Fee Book, the University of Aberdeen*.

⁴⁰ Yang paid "preliminary examination of Arts fee" on 9th September, see *Preliminary Fee Book, the University of Aberdeen*.

the University of Aberdeen.⁴¹ They all chose to live in flats in a Victorian terrace house on Devonshire Road, a quiet area close to the city centre on the other side of the city from the university.⁴²

According to Wu Zhihui's diaries, during the period between 1903 and 1909, before Yang came to Aberdeen, there was a small group of Chinese students, around ten people, in Scotland, most of whom stayed in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. Two young Chinese men named Lei Wenquan (雷文泉) and Ye Guorui (叶国瑞), students of the Anglo-Chinese College in Gulangyu, Fujian province, were brought to Edinburgh for further education by their Scottish headmaster whose Chinese name was Jin Xifu (金禧甫).⁴³ Inspired by Wu Zhihui's letter to his friend in Japan, Ding Wenjiang, Zhuang Wenya (庄文亚) and Li Zuhong (李祖鸿), who were studying there and had become deeply involved in the storm of protest against the Russian occupation in Manchuria in the spring of 1903, sailed to Britain in May 1904 with the intention of studying in Edinburgh. After spending two years at a secondary school in Spalding, Lincolnshire, Ding studied at a Glasgow technical college and Glasgow University in the period from 1907 to 1911.⁴⁴ In October 1904 Kang Youwei paid a one-month visit to Scotland where he visited Edinburgh, Glasgow and

⁴¹ Yang Zengao was born into a civil servant family near Shanghai. According to *Students' Handbook, 1908-9*, he was listed in the category of science students and lived at 118 Crown Street. See p. 137. In 1909 he changed to study arts. See his matriculation record at the Faculty of Arts on 8th March 1909 in *Preliminary Fee Book, the University of Aberdeen*. We do not know whether he was a self-sponsored or government scholarship student. Between 1909 and 1911 he studied Constitutional law and history, private and international law in the first year, chemistry and logic in the second year and public international law in the third year. He obtained his M.A. degree in 1911. After his return to China, he received appointment in the Board of Education in Beijing. Unfortunately he died in 1912. See *Records of the Arts Class, 1908-12, Law*, p. 90. And *Student Register, faculty of Arts*. (Both in the Special Collection of the University of Aberdeen)

⁴² *Students' Handbook, 1908-9, 1909-10, 1910-11, 1911-2*, published by the Students' Representative Council. Yang Changji lived at 34 Devonshire Road in the first year and moved to no. 45 of the same street in 1910 where he lived until his graduation. Zhang Shizhao stayed at 34 Devonshire Road until he left for China in 1911.

⁴³ Wu Zhihui, "Zi Subao an zhi fu'Ou riji" (Diaries from the period after the *Su bao* case to arrival in Britain), *Wu Zhihui Quanji* [The complete works of Wu Zhihui], vol. 12, pp. 694-727.

⁴⁴ According to Wu Zhihui's diary, Wu, together with Lei and Ye, met Ding, Zhuang and Lin in Edinburgh. Ding and Li left for Lincolnshire on 4 August 1904. See Wu Zhihui, "Minguoqian jiu zhi ba nian Aiguo Xueshe jiesan ji fu Yinghou zhi riji" (Diaries during the period between the disbandment of the Patriotic Society and days in Britain (from 4 June 1903 to 3 February 1905)), *Wu Zhihui quanli*, vol. 12, p. 827. For a more detailed account of the dramatic story of Ding Wenjiang's study in Scotland available in English, see Charlotte Furth's *Ting Wen-chiang: Science and China's new Culture* (1970), chapter 2, esp. pp. 23-6.

Aberdeen.⁴⁵ The agenda of Kang's visit and how Chinese students and local Chinese community responded to him are not known. We have only found so far that Wu Zhihui recorded the date of Kang's visit to Aberdeen in his diary.

According to Wu Zhihui a "Chinese Students Association in Scotland" was established at the beginning of 1905.⁴⁶ There is no further information about the structure and activities of the Association, but it seems to have been a very loose organisation unlike most Chinese students associations in Japan that gave priority to politics. Wu never enrolled in any formal higher educational institution. Soon after his meeting with Sun Yat-sen in London in the spring of 1905, he joined the Tongmeng hui and became involved in the advocacy of republican revolutionary ideas among the local Chinese and setting up a connection between Tongmeng hui and Chinese students in Britain in order to win over more people to support a republican revolution. Yang Yulin and Zhang Shizhao were his close friends. But both chose study in remote Aberdeen with the intention of keeping away from the political activities in which they had previously been closely involved, as they now believed in saving China through the promotion of study (学术救国 *xueshujiuguo*).

Intellectual heritage of the University of Aberdeen

The University of Aberdeen is one of the four oldest universities in Scotland.⁴⁷ The teaching of philosophy and moral philosophy at Aberdeen University had a long history. During the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, Aberdeen academics enjoyed an Europe-wide reputations, and their lasting influence also reached North America and India.⁴⁸ On the top of the list of famous names of the University of Aberdeen stands Thomas Reid (1710-96), the founder of the Scottish common sense school and

⁴⁵ Lo Jung-pang, "Sequel to the Chronological Autobiography [of K'ang Yu-wei], in *K'ang Yu-wei: A Biography and a symposium*, edited, with translation by Lo Jung-pang (1967), p. 197. Kang crossed over to England from Holland on 29 Sept. 1904 accompanied by his interpreter, Zhou Guoxian. Kang visited Edinburgh and Glasgow. He left from Liverpool on 3rd Nov. for Canada. But according to Wu Zhihui's diary, Kang arrived in Aberdeen on 2nd October. See Wu Zhihui, "Minguoqian jiu zhi ba nian Aiguo Xueshe jiesan ji fuYinghou zhi riji" [Diaries during the period between the disbandment of the Patriotic Society and days in Britain (from 4 June 1903 to 3 February 1905)], in *Wu Zhihui quanli*, vol. 12, p. 828.

⁴⁶ In his diary of 9 January 1905 Wu Zhihui wrote, "Sulan xueshenghui (苏兰学生会) or Chinese Students Association in Scotland was established yesterday." *Ibid*, p. 828.

⁴⁷ The University of St. Andrews was founded in 1411, Glasgow in 1450, Aberdeen in 1494 and Edinburgh in 1582. See Alexander Morgan's *Scottish University Studies*, Oxford University Press, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Jennifer Carter, "Foreword" to *Academe and Empire* (1993), p. v.

a prominent member of the Scottish Enlightenment. He entered Marischal College in 1722 at the age of twelve, and remained there until 1736.⁴⁹ He became a Regent of King's college in 1751 and remained there till 1764, when he was awarded the moral philosophy chair at Old College in Glasgow in succession to Adam Smith (1723-90).⁵⁰ During his professorial days in Aberdeen the philosophy of Reid took definite shape.

The theory of knowledge was a fundamental part of his philosophy. As with Kant, so with Reid, his philosophical interest came directly from David Hume (1711-1776). In his *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (published in 1764), he opposed the theory of perception and ideas articulated by Hume and advocated a common consciousness of mankind. These ideas were further elaborated in his later writings.

His training in mathematics, physics and astronomy unquestionably facilitated his inclination towards an empirical and scientific methodology. He was interested in perception psychology and emphasised the psychological basis of ethics. He treated both the theory of knowledge and the ethics on the inductive or Baconian method.⁵¹ His ethical thought was marked by an emphasis on the application of ethical principles to moral practice, that is essentially similar to Yang's philosophy. As a admirer of the ethical doctrine of Stoics as expounded in Cicero's *De Officiis*, and also the writings of Bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752), Reid advanced a form of Christian Stoicism close to that of Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), whose doctrine of "moral sense" was widely influential at the time.⁵² During his professorial days, a

⁴⁹ John Malcolm Bulloch, *A History of the University of Aberdeen, 1495-1895*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1895, p. 150. (Hereafter, Bulloch).

⁵⁰ Ibid. T. Reid was well versed in Mathematics, and had a great interest in physics and astronomy. He replaced Alexander Rait on 25 October 1751 and was recognised as the most accomplished mathematician and natural philosopher of his day. See Paul J. Wood, *The Aberdeen Enlightenment: the Arts curriculum in the eighteenth century* (1993), pp. 29-30. (Hereafter, *The Aberdeen Enlightenment*)

⁵¹ William L. Davidson, "The University's contribution to philosophy" in *Studies in the history and development of the University of Aberdeen* (1906), p. 78-80. (Hereafter, W.L. Davidson)

⁵² Francis Hutcheson, a prominent Scottish philosopher, was educated at Glasgow. Following the line of Shaftesbury (1671- 1713), the first moralist to introduce psychological experience into the analysis of ethical propositions, Hutcheson developed one of the most elaborate systems of moral philosophy of the time, which, if not directly, influenced Hume's speculations. He is also better remembered as the original author of the phrase "the greatest happiness for the greatest number" from which J. Bentham's essential moral principle – the object of all legislation should be "the greatest happiness for the greatest number" – derived. See Henry Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics*,

group of kindred spirits gathered around Reid. In 1785 he founded the Aberdeen Philosophical Society, which led to the foundation of the Scottish School of philosophy.⁵³ The Scottish common sense philosophy almost became a philosophical orthodoxy in Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century through a succession of Scottish popularizers, of whom the most successful was Dugald Stewart.⁵⁴

The tradition of Christian Stoicism was also fostered by other “regents” in moral philosophy at Aberdeen such as David Fordyce, whose moral philosophy lectures represented a synthesis of ideas drawn from Joseph Butler, Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson. This tradition was still present in the days when Yang studied at Aberdeen. Bishop Butler’s work was included on the required reading list for his moral philosophy course.⁵⁵

The philosophical heritage of the University of Aberdeen was also associated with lectures and writings of such other Enlightenment figures as George Turnbull, to whom Reid’s doctrine of the “moral sense” owed much, Thomas Blackwell, James Beattie, William Duncan and James Dunbar.⁵⁶ In the nineteenth century international reputations were enjoyed by the psychologist John Abercrombie and Alexander Bain (1818-1903).

As a graduate of Marischal College Bain imbibed the philosophy of Reid and Beattie there, but his doctrine of sense and intellect developed in a very different direction from the Reidian school. Bain was the first professor of Logic and Rhetoric after the fusion of Marischal and King’s colleges in 1860. His popularity among the students may be seen in that he was twice elected Rector of the University, remaining there until 1880. Bain made notable contributions to philosophy, to education, and to English, but what established his international reputation were his contributions to the school of associationism.⁵⁷ The scientific spirit of Scottish philosophy started by

(1960), pp. 190, 201-4, and also Runes, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 133. For Reid’s intellectual links to Butler and Hutcheson see Wood, pp. 34-5.

⁵³ W.L. Davidson, p. 80.

⁵⁴ *The Cambridge dictionary of philosophy* (1997), p. 719.

⁵⁵ *Aberdeen University Calendar, 1910-11*. (Hereafter, *AUC*)

⁵⁶ See Paul J Wood, pp. 46-7, 49.

⁵⁷ Associationism was founded by David Hume and David Hartley and developed further by James Mill, J. S. Mill and A. Bain. See *Dictionary of philosophy* (London, 1972).

Reid survived in Bain's teaching and writings. Like Reid, he was proficient in mathematics and physics, and emphasised a scientific foundation for the observation of mental process and moral conduct. As a philosopher, he was noted as a disciple of Mill and Comte and a religious agnostic. His general intellectual stance ran counter to the religious orthodoxy of the time, and provoked objections from his colleague, William Martin, professor of moral philosophy from 1860-1876. Martin defended religious belief based on the rational view of the Scottish common sense school.⁵⁸

However, Bain had an abiding influence on thinking in Aberdeen through two of his best students - William Minto and William L. Davidson who succeeded him as chairs of Logic and Rhetoric, the two men holding the position for almost half a century between them.⁵⁹ Yang Changji attended Davidson's lectures. Furthermore, Alexander Bain's work was also included in Yang's required reading list for the course of "education". According to Yang's diary, Bain was one of the Aberdonian teachers who most influenced his philosophy. In 1915 Yang re-read Bain's psychology in order to use it in his lectures at the First Normal School in Changsha.⁶⁰

Days in Aberdeen: Teachers, lectures and study life

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century Scottish higher education underwent a transformation that has largely remained in place till the present day. A series of new practices in the aspects of teaching methods, curricula, examination and structure was applied. When Yang attended the University, the "seminar and tutorial teaching," which replaced the 260 years old Scottish practice of formal lecturing and note-taking in 1902, was still a novelty. Under an act of 1889, the Preliminary Examination and courses with multiple options were introduced in 1892, and a new scheme of Arts Curriculum for the degree of M. A., devised by Aberdeen University

⁵⁸ R. D. Anderson, *The student community at Aberdeen, 1860-1939* (1988), p. 23

⁵⁹ William Minto held the chair of Professor in Logic and Rhetoric between 1880 and 1893 and was followed by William L. Davidson from 1895 to 1926. See *The fusion* pp. 93-6. For recollections of Bain by his students see chapter 4 "The University review: learned doctors and masters" in *The fusion*. The chapter is a reprint of the Centenary issue of the *Aberdeen University Review*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 123, September 1960 which drew on past publications such as *Class Records*, early numbers of the *Aberdeen University Review*, *Alma Mater*, W. Keith Leask's *Interamna Borealis*, and the volume edited by P. J. Anderson called *Aurora Boealis Academic*. For a very brief account of Bain's thought and influence see W.L. Davidson, pp. 93-96.

⁶⁰ Bain's work which John Clark, lecturer of Education, put in the required reading list is *Education as a science* (London, 1879). See *AUC, 1910-11*, p. 80. During March and April, Yang

to be different from other Scottish universities was adopted in 1908.⁶¹ Although some traditional subjects remained, the range of fields was much wider than before, and now included modern languages, history, economics and political science.⁶² Yang and his Chinese colleagues may well not have been aware of the recent changes, but they did benefit from these educational innovations.

Although Yang's choice seems generally to have followed the instruction of the University, it was also based on his own desire and interest.⁶³ For the first year he chose English and logic, and for the second year, Moral philosophy, Education, and public international law for the summer term; in the final year, Yang took constitutional law and history, political economics and jurisprudence.⁶⁴ In the new Arts curriculum at least one classical language (Latin or Greek) was compulsory.⁶⁵ Yang and other Chinese students were the exceptions. They were asked to pass the "Preliminary examination" but were exempted from taking a classical language.

The subjects Yang chose could be roughly divided into two categories: the humanities and social science. The humanities part referred to philosophy and education which was regarded by Yang as the fundamental knowledge necessary for an individual in order to become a true human being, while knowledge of politics and law was necessary as a precondition for being able to take public service. Shed in this light, the influence of the Confucian ideal of "inner sagehood" (self-cultivation leading to personal self-realisation) and "outer kingship" (ordering and

read Bain's "psychology". See Yang's *Riji*, (1915), entries of 19 March, 23 March and 20 April, p. 161, 162, 175.

⁶¹ The Universities (Scotland) Act passed in 1889 was a milestone. The University Court was enlarged and its power was greatly strengthened. The Students' Representative Council was established, and women students were admitted in 1892. Another step of vast importance was to establish Faculties of Science in the Scottish Universities. The reform of the old inflexible Arts curriculum with its eight prescribed courses at the Scottish universities started in 1892. In 1907, the four Scottish universities agreed to work out their own scheme for the M.A. degree. See W. Douglas Simpson, "The University of Aberdeen, 1860-1960" in *The Fusion*, pp. 7-13, 32-4, and Louise Donald, "The history of the General Council of the University of Aberdeen, 1860-1960," in *The Fusion*, pp. 80-3.

⁶² R. D. Anderson provides an account of the social and intellectual consequences of the educational reform of 1889, especially in the Arts Faculty, see his "chapter 3" in *The student community at Aberdeen, 1860-1939* (1988), pp. 56-8.

⁶³ See "Selection of subjects" and "Order of study", in *AUC, 1909-10*, pp. 135-6.

⁶⁴ See *Aberdeen University, Student Register, Arts-Science-Divinity, 1907 onward*. According to *Aberdeen University, Class Register in moral philosophy*, Yang Changji took ordinary class and Zhang Shizhao took honours class.

harmonising of the world) on Yang's curriculum can be seen clearly. According to the Confucian ideal of *junzi* (superior man), these two tasks formed an indivisible whole. The complete attainment of *ren* or humanity could only be realised in one's public vocation, and in turn, the achievement of a good society was dependent on a leading role being given to the *junzi* or man of humanity (仁人 *renren*).

In order to examine those influences to which Yang was exposed at Aberdeen, it is necessary to give details of his teacher, the lectures he attended and the required reading books. Yang's training in philosophy at Aberdeen consisted of two parts: Logic and moral philosophy. The Logic lectures covered three areas: (1) Logic – formal, inductive and definition and classification; (2) psychology – general analysis of mind, special analysis of process of knowledge; and (3) introduction to the history of modern philosophy.⁶⁶ The professor of Logic under whom Yang studied was William Leslie Davidson. Like his predecessor Professor William Minto, Davidson's philosophy and scholarship were profoundly influenced by A. Bain. Davidson's representative works included his Burnett lectures on *Theism as Grounded in Human Nature* and *The Stoic Creed*. To continue the tradition of Scottish philosophy was one of his strong desires, as is evident in the aforementioned proposal for a course in Logic which emphasised the psychological knowledge of mind and the process of knowledge.⁶⁷

The professor of moral philosophy, James Black Baillie (later Sir James Baillie) was educated at Edinburgh and Trinity College, Cambridge, before moving to Aberdeen in 1902 at the age of twenty-nine, by when he had already established his academic reputation as a leading interpreter of Hegel through his works *Hegel's Logic* (1901), *Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind* (1910) and *The Idealistic Construction of Experience* (1906). The latter two books, representative of his pre-war thought, were important in promoting Hegelian studies in Britain. He praised Hegel's

⁶⁵ W. Douglas Simpson, "The University of Aberdeen, 1860-1960" in *The Fusion*, p. 34. The practice of a classical language (Latin or Greek) as a compulsory subject remained until 1956.

⁶⁶ During terms 1 and 2 the Logic class met one hour daily five days a week and during term 3, one, two and three hours a week in alternate weeks. See *AUC*, 1909-10.

⁶⁷ Davidson's lectures were characterised neither by the eloquence of oratory nor impressive flights of philosophical imagination, but by the steady enlightenment of students' minds on the subjects he taught and his thorough preparation. See W. S. Urquhart's account of "W. L. Davidson" reprinted in *The Fusion*, pp. 179-182.

Phenomenology of Mind and embraced wholeheartedly the Hegelian view of the spiritual development of human experience. Furthermore, he accorded full attention to Hegel's dialectics, a subject usually neglected in British Hegelianism. The charisma of his oration, it was said, lay partly in his ability to reduce complicated problems to their simple basic elements and also through his drawing upon the rich variety of human experience to illuminate his points, in addition to his fine presence and beautifully modulated voice. During the First World War he developed his alternative talent of management while serving in Whitehall. After the war his most representative work was *Studies in Human Nature* (1921), although it had no connection with the absolute idealism of his earlier work. The tragedy and meaninglessness of the First World War shook his belief in the Hegelian concept of world-reason. He passed backwards from Hegel to Hume, and human nature became his central philosophical interest. In 1924 he was appointed vice-chancellor of Leeds University and left Aberdeen and active scholarly life at the same time.⁶⁸

The topics of the moral philosophy lecture course were divided into 4 categories: (1) fundamental ethical notions; (2) psychology of moral life; (3) ideals of moral life and (4) sociology and the theory of the state.⁶⁹ This framework of the curriculum profoundly influenced Yang's approach of moral philosophy.

The books referred to in the lecture were J. Dewey and J. H. Tufts, *Ethics*; Bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752), *Three Sermons on Human Nature*; J. S. Mill's *Liberty and Utilitarianism*; I. Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*; H. Spencer, *Principles of Ethics* (esp. Pt I: Data); Wilhelm Max Wundt's (1832-1920) *Ethics* (Pt. I); Henry Sidgwick's (1838-1900) *Outlines of the History of Ethics and Methods of Ethics*; T. H. Green's (1836-1882) *Prolegomena to Ethics* (esp. Book III); Bernard Bosanquet's (1848-1923) *Psychology of the moral self and Philosophical theory of the state*; Samuel Alexander's (1859-1938) *Moral order and progress*; John Stuart Mackenzie's (1860-1935) *Manual of ethics*; Leonard Trelawney Hobhouse's (1864-

⁶⁸ W. Taylor, "James Black Baillie" in *The Fusion*, pp. 172-3. Rudolf Metz, *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, tran. by H. Sturt [et al] (1938) pp. 317-9. (Hereafter, *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*)

⁶⁹ *AUC 1909-10*, p. 75.

1929) *Morals in evolution: a study in comparative ethics*; Plato's *Republic*, (Books I and IV); and John Henry Muirhead's (1855-1940) *The elements of ethics*.⁷⁰

The reading list shows that Bailie's moral philosophy lectures were strikingly up-to-date in content, and in touch with the latest developments in ethics, politics and psychology. Apart from Plato, works of Greek and Roman ethics and Christianity and mediaeval ethics were excluded, although students could acquire a general knowledge of Western classical and mediaeval ethics through H. Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*. Teaching was taken up with modern British thought and German Kantian idealism. Taking psychology as a scientific basis of moral philosophy marked one aspect of the curriculum. It is apparent that the main emphasis was on modern British thought. However, surprisingly, Bacon, Hobbes and Locke, the most significant thinkers of the classical empirical tradition and originators of modern British ethics, were not included on the list, which, instead, started with Joseph Butler. Butler's thought, mainly represented by his influential *Sermons*, took the starting point of an opposition to the Hobbesian conception of human nature, namely that human nature was egoistical, amoral and unregulated. His optimistic view of human nature was strongly influenced by Stoicism and Platoism.⁷¹ Butler's thought influenced T. Reid profoundly. The selection manifests Bailie's philosophical interests. J. S. Mackenzie's *Manual of Ethics* was "the most comprehensive survey of almost the whole field of ethics in English" of the time. Dewey and Tufts' *Ethics*, which was representative of the distinctive American expositions of ethics, later became one of the most important sources of Yang's lectures on "Self-cultivation during his Changsha days."⁷²

To a certain extent, Bailie's curriculum covered the most important ethical works of the British utilitarian and empirical tradition, the evolutionary school and Neo-idealist movement. The last four decades of nineteenth-century Britain witnessed the rise of utilitarianism and modern empiricism, which gradually replaced the

⁷⁰ The order of the titles is the same as the original one that appeared in *AUC*, 1909-10. I have added the dates of the individual writers.

⁷¹ H. Sidgwick, *Outlines of the history of ethics*, (1960 enlarged) p. 191-8. (Hereafter, *History of ethics*).

⁷² For the position of Dewey and Tufts' *Ethics* in philosophical history see H. Sidgwick, *History of ethics*, p. 338. Yang re-read Dewey and Tufts' *Ethics* from May to July of 1915 for preparation of his lecture. See Yang Changji, *Riji*, 1915.

commanding position of the Scottish school. J. S. Mill's famous attack on Hamilton in 1865 which signified the end of the authority of the Scottish school was exactly parallel historically to T. Reid's criticism of Hume one hundred years earlier.⁷³ Nevertheless, Bailie ignored Hume, a titan of the British empirical tradition, and Bentham, the leading figure of the utilitarian school, and, instead, singled out Mill and Sidgwick as representatives of the new philosophy.

L. T. Hobhouse was considered by some to be "the most notable embodiment of modern evolutionist thought," and was recognised as possessing "the most encyclopaedic mind" among British philosophers after Spencer.⁷⁴ In his *Morals in Evolution*, an extensive study of the historical evolution of morality, he attempted to synthesise empirical and idealist ethical thoughts as he had done in his epistemology and metaphysics. On the one hand, he asserted general happiness as an integral component. On the other hand, he shared Green's criticism of hedonism.⁷⁵ The rationalist element marked his ethics and theories of mind and knowledge. Furthermore, in his *Metaphysical Theory of the State* he kept in line with Green's liberal view of relations between the individual and society, thus refuting the illiberal, or Hegelian, tendency to raise society or the state above the interests of its members.⁷⁶ He was the first to name Green as a New Liberal.⁷⁷

Although Bailie may have tried to provide a balanced view of the modern development of British ethics and political thought, his emphasis on the Oxford idealist movement in the late nineteenth century and beginning of twentieth century is evident. The idealistic movement has to be conceived of as a unique counter-current to the ingrained empirical tradition of British thought. The thought of T. H. Green, one of the pioneers of this movement, was further developed by a group of his distinguished students including B. Bosanquet, an absolute idealist, J. H. Muirhead and J. S. Mackenzie.

J. H. Muirhead received his philosophical training at the two centres of the neo-idealist movement, Glasgow and Balliol College, Oxford, studying under E. Caird

⁷³ *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, pp. 29-46.

⁷⁴ *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, p. 150.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 167.

⁷⁶ George H. Sabine, *A history of political theory* (1956), p. 613.

(1835-1908) and T. H. Green. He wasn't an original thinker but rather acted as an able steward of their legacy. The development of the British Idealist movement owed much to his contribution. Although interested in morality and social and political life, he was concerned more with practical problems than theoretical ones. *The Elements of Ethics* (1892) was his early philosophical work.⁷⁸

Like Muirhead, S. Mackenzie's early interest in philosophy was also kindled by E. Caird at Glasgow. The *Manual of Ethics* (1893), Mackenzie's first work dealing with ethics, gained great popularity.⁷⁹ His early writings on ethics kept basically in line with the leading ideas of the older school of Hegelians.⁸⁰ Politically, this group of thinkers represented a theoretical attempt at an idealist revision of liberalism, and philosophically, a synthesis between the empirical, scientific approach to society characterised by evolutionary theory and the neo-Hegelian view of reality as essentially spiritual.⁸¹ These New Liberals who were not only theorists but also political activists, were opposed to *laissez-faire* and in favour of state intervention in social, economic and cultural life.⁸² Therefore Yang was exposed not only to Green's thought, but also to the other eminent exponents of the idealist school. (For a detailed discussion of Yang's interpretation of and remarks on Green and his school see chapter 5.)

Among the preeminent thinkers of the New Realist school, Bailie ignored Russell and Whitehead, choosing instead to teach Samuel Alexander, who had elaborated a coherent and comprehensive metaphysical system in a single work entitled *Space, Time and Deity*. In an earlier work, *Moral, order, and progress* which bore a bold impact of Darwinism and was regarded as a great significant work in his philosophical development, Alexander had formulated his own idea of equilibrium as the ultimate moral ideal.⁸³

⁷⁷ Melvin Richter, *The politics of conscience: T. H. Green and his age*, (London, 1964), p. 374 and 267. (Hereafter, *T.H. Green and his age*)

⁷⁸ *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, p. 305-9.

⁷⁹ Sidgwick remarked that it was the most comprehensive survey in English of almost the whole field of ethics. See his *History of Ethics*, p. 338.

⁸⁰ *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, p. 312.

⁸¹ Jeremy Waldron, "Liberalism," *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Vol. V, pp. 598-605. George H. Sabine, *A history of political theory* (1956), pp. 607-626. And also "L. T. Hobhouse" in *The Fontana Biographical Companion to modern Thought* (1983), p332.

⁸² Melvin Richter, *T.H. Green and his age*, esp. chapter 9, pp. 267-191.

⁸³ *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, p.622-8.

The teaching of moral philosophy was also assisted by Robert Morrison McIver (1882-1970), later a leading figure in modern sociology and political philosophy. Educated in Edinburgh, he was appointed assistant lecturer in moral philosophy in 1909, lecturer in politics in the following year, and in political science and sociology in 1911 when Yang Changji studied these subjects.⁸⁴ He was one of the most influential supports of the Sociological Society founded in 1909 under the guidance of Stanley Turner, lecturer in political economics and also Yang's teacher.⁸⁵ He moved to Toronto in 1915 and then to America where he took a chair in political philosophy and sociology at Columbia University from 1927.

In addition to Logic and Moral Philosophy, the Education course also opened a way for Yang to encounter another important component of Western thought. Education and pedagogy were new subjects at Aberdeen. The first chair in Education was John Clark.⁸⁶ Unlike Yang's Logic and Moral philosophy teachers, John Clark was an educator with nearly twenty years experience in schools.⁸⁷ His profound interest in the general problems of education and in the history of education in Scotland, bore academic fruit in his book, entitled *Short studies in education in Scotland*, that was included on the required reading list.⁸⁸

Education was treated as a science. Its scope, end and aim, and its relation to the basic sciences of physiology, psychology, logic and ethics were among the essential elements of the course. The theories of moral education and its methods, including the cultivation of emotion and the training of will and discipline at school, were taught in the second term. The course also focused on the history of education and the development of educational ideas since the Renaissance. Among the set texts were J. Locke's *Some Thoughts concerning education*, Rousseau's *Emile* and Spencer's *Education*. Yang's educational thought, especially his emphasis on physical education in theory and in practice owed much to Spencer. He taught

⁸⁴ AUC, 1909-10, 1910-11, 1911-12.

⁸⁵ R. D. Anderson, *The student community at Aberdeen, 1860-1939* (1988), p.81.

⁸⁶ *The Fusion*, p. 209.

⁸⁷ He came to Aberdeen in 1879 as headmaster of the Gymnasium in the Old Town, and then became a master at Aberdeen Grammar School. See W. Keith Leask, *Intermna Borealis* (Aberdeen, 1917), p. 343-4n31.

⁸⁸ H J.G. Grierson, "John Clark" in *Aberdeen University Review* (1939), reprinted in *The Fusion*, p. 209. See also AUC, 1910-11, pp. 79-80.

Spencer in the First Normal School in Changsha, and even asked his students to refer to Spencer's arguments in order to criticise Hunan's educational deficiencies.⁸⁹ Alexander Bain's *Education as a science* was also included.⁹⁰

Yang was not content with the acquisition of Western educational theories and experience from books and lectures. He also wanted to obtain first hand knowledge of a British, or, more precisely, a Scottish school education through personal investigation. His suggestion received a warm response from his teacher John Clark, who gave him the chance to see real school life in a medium-size primary school in Aberdeen in the winter of 1910. The survey was recorded in two articles published in *Journal of Hunan Education* immediately after Yang's return home in the spring of 1913.⁹¹ Yang was most concerned with moral education. He was especially impressed by the weekly assembly, the scheme to address the drinking problem in Scotland, the encouragement of frugality and saving, religious education, and the fondness for music and dance. The last one was important in giving him ideas concerning aesthetic education. He also paid attention to trivial details of daily school practice, such as the methods of running a saving schemes for pupils in school and the ways in which teachers dealt with punishment and reward.⁹² All of these were sources of inspiration for his suggestions for the reform of Chinese schools and social practices after returning to China.

From the point of view of structure, the study of Western political systems and economies was another important component of Yang's curriculum. Yang took public international law in the summer term of 1911. His study in the final academic year (1911-12) was fully occupied by three subjects: constitutional law and history,

⁸⁹ It was one of the examination questions set by Yang in 1914. See Yang's *Riji*, 1914, May 27, p. 33.

⁹⁰ See footnote 64. The other required books were Robert Herbert Quick, *Educational Reformers* (1893); F.V.H. Painter, *History of Education* (1894); Gabriel Campayre, *History of pedagogy* (1890); Thomas Davidson, *Aristotle* (1892), Simon Somerville Laurie, *On primary instruction in relation to education* (Edinburgh, 1867) and *Institution of education: comprising an introduction to rational psychology* (Edinburgh, 1892); Herbert C. Bowen, *Froebel and education by self-activity*; Thomas Raymont, *The principles of education*; J. Welton and Blandford's *Moral training through school discipline* and Sir M.E. Sadler, *Moral instruction and Training in schools*. See *AUC*, 1910-11.

⁹¹ "Sugelan xiaoxuexiao guiyu" (Primary school regulations in Scotland) published in *Hunan Journal of Education* 2.7 (31 April 1913). "Ji Yingguo zhi jiaoyu qingxing" (A narration of the British education) appeared in *Hunan Journal of Education* 2. 14/5 (31 August 1913), 2.17 (30 Nov 1913), 3.3 (31 March 1914) and 3.4 (30 April 1914); and in *Hangzhou Jiaoyu zhoubao* or Hangzhou Education Weekly, no. 30-33 (30 Jan., 8, 15, 22 February 1914)

political economics and jurisprudence. Although the teaching of law had a long history in Aberdeen, “international law” and “constitutional law and history” were new subjects. Lectureships were instituted in 1908 just one year before Yang’s enrolment. Dr. George Duncan (tenure from 1908 to 1936), and Robert Moir Williamson (tenure from 1908 to 1933) took the lectureships of international law and constitutional law respectively. Constitutional law and history were the focal points taking eighty lectures while the other two subjects each took forty lectures.

R. M. Williamson’s lectures on constitution law and history were divided into two parts: analytical and historical. The analytical part, which had eleven topics, provided a general knowledge of Western democratic systems of government, their structure, power, limits and responsibility, and the relations of the legislature, executive and judiciary to each other and to the rights of the individual. The British constitutional monarchy and its practice were given particular attention.⁹³ The historical part referred to the evolution of the British constitutional history from the Norman Conquest to the present time.

From the course Yang also acquired a historical knowledge of British elections. This knowledge helped to form his arguments concerning the practice of corruption and bribery at public elections in China. He wrote, “In the past, Britain had the practice of buying votes at elections, a MP’s campaign needed fifty thousand *yuan*. I learned this from the lectures of British constitutional law when I was at Aberdeen University. However, in recent years, bribery has been prohibited strictly by the law. He who wanted to become Member of Parliament could only use speech to express his political views and policies; bribery and the issuing of threats were not allowed. If bribery were discovered, not only would the MP be disqualified, he would not be allowed to stand again for seven years. After returning home I saw China’s current MP election campaign and felt deeply disappointed. That was because China has adopted the Japanese practice of election.”⁹⁴

⁹² The article is reprinted in *Yang Changji wenji*, pp. 32-42.

⁹³ The topics of the part of constitutional law included: the nature of constitutional law; safeguards of the rights of individuals; characteristics of the British constitution; parliament; the House of Commons and its procedure including private Bill legislation; the house of Lords; the crown; the cabinet; party government; the administrative departments of government; the relation between the home government and the colonies. See *AUC, 1911-2*, p. 116.

⁹⁴ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), entry of 27 September 1914, p. 88.

Because the House of Lords refused to pass a “financial Bill,” Prime Minister Asquith dissolved parliament in December 1909 and in January 1910 a general election was held. The event provided a living example of British political life for Yang.⁹⁵ The problem of paying subsidies to MPs captured Yang’s interest. He had a talk with Stanley Turner, his lecturer in political economy, about the matter. “In the past, British MPs received no payment, but recently the Labour Party has changed the policy. All of the Labour MPs are now subsidized by their party, although the amount of allowance is far from sufficient to cover their necessary expenditure on work and living. Therefore only one who comes from a wealthy family can afford to be an MP.” He agreed with Turner’s view that the payment of MPs should be limited; otherwise, it would encourage a tendency to regard being an MP as a job of profit making. This might then lend to corruption. Yang had also observed local government elections and remarked that “councillors are elected. All of them are really interested in politics and enthusiastically devote themselves to public affairs even without salary. It is roughly similar to the election of *duzong* (都总 heads of official sanctioned militia at the level of 都 *du*) and *tuanzong* (团总 militia headmen) in our country.”⁹⁶

That Yang took the subject of political economy as an indication of his concern with the role of the economy. Yang recognised the significant role of economic conditions, political situations, and social relations in shaping a person’s moral character and that promotion of people’s livelihood was the central focus of a benevolent government. This might have resulted from his study of Confucian classics in his youth. *Mengzi* said that the “secure mind” (恒心 *hengxin*) depended on a “secure livelihood” (恒产 *hengchan*), and that economic elements were decisive in both the individual’s and the state’s moral life on which an ideal benevolent

⁹⁵ E.E.Reynolds & N.H. Brasher, *Britain in the Twentieth Century, 1900-1964*, p. 41-3.

⁹⁶ Yang Changji, *Riji, 1914*, entries of 27th and 28th April, pp. 88-9. At the Nanxue hui’s (Southern Study Society) question time, when he raised the question of Western democracy, Yang drew a parallel between the Western election system and China’s practice of the election of heads of official sanctioned militia at *Du* (都) level. In *Qingtai du*, Yang’s home, there used to be only one Head of *du* militia. After 1895, the participating gentries in *du* had a meeting to decide that the number of headman of *du* militia should be increased up to five through election. *Qingtai du* consisted of ten *jia* (甲), each of which had thirty-six *tuan* (团). For details of Yang’s question see *Xiang bao*, no. 28 (7 April 1898).

government was based.⁹⁷ The *Great Learning* provided him with the crucial principle of the development of the economy. During the Reform of 1898 he had also been exposed to the call for support to be given to reviving national wealth and power. Therefore, it is no wonder that Yang chose to study politics and economics.

The topics of political economy included the agents of production, the theory of value, the distribution of income, finance, business organisation and trade. It is interesting to note that Yang achieved his highest mark in this subject.⁹⁸ Yang Yulin also took political economy. Indeed, this was the only subject Yulin took during his years in Aberdeen.⁹⁹

Attending lectures did not take up all Yang's time: there was also time devoted to questionings and discussions. The students' discussion attended by Chinese students became a forum at which East met West. For instance, Yang Changji and Yang Yulin attended a students' discussion of whether the will was free. A brief record of the discussion can be found in Yang Changji's diary. The argument between Yang Yulin and Scottish students touched on the fundamental difference between Chinese culture, which was dominated by Confucian humanism, and Western philosophy, which still remained under the shadow of religion. While the majority of attendants held a negative view of free will, because they were Christians, Yang Yulin opposed the view strongly. When a student asked Yulin, "who then created you?" Yulin replied resolutely, "I created myself." The student stared tongue-tied, not knowing how to refute this argument.¹⁰⁰ Yang Yulin's answer reflected exactly one of the striking features of Confucian humanism which regarded man as co-creator of the universe and believed in the human mind and its function "will" as the spontaneous and sufficient inner source for achieving personal moral perfection. There was no need to appeal to the existence of God or the immorality of supernatural beings.

⁹⁷ *Mengzi*, 1A7 and 3A3. See Tu Weiming, "Mencian perception of moral self-development" in *Humanity and self-cultivation* (1979) p. 59.

⁹⁸ Yang's political economy obtained mark II, which meant "honourable." The examination result consisted of six types at that time in Aberdeen: I = Prizemen; II = Honourable mention or subsequent order; III passed respectably; IV just passed; S = satisfactory; and R = Rejected. See *Student Register, Faculty of Arts, Volume 1, 1860-1*. For Yang's examination results see *Student Register, Arts-Science-Divinity, 1907 onward*.

⁹⁹ See *Fee Book, Arts*. Yang Yulin paid fee for "Political economy". However, there is no any record of Yang Yulin's examination results.

¹⁰⁰ Yang Changji, *Riji, 1915*, entry of 27 March, p. 165-6.

During his stay in Aberdeen Yang developed a view of a sound middle-class society which became one of the most important aspects of his social, economic and political thought. The formation of the view owed not only to his reading at Aberdeen, but also to his personal observations. He seized every possible chance to go deeper into British social and cultural life, for instance, through travel around Scotland and England, attending concerts and staying over night at a classmate's home in Huntly. He was fully impressed by the wealthy and peaceful city life of Edwardian Scotland at the beginning of the twentieth century: a great number of wealthy families, efficient government, free school education, clean and well-constructed streets and well-educated people with gentle manner. From his later writings we find that social customs were Yang's main concern. Topics included marriage, inheritance, the nuclear family, respect for individual rights and freedom of thought, and the social and educational role of dance and music, etc.

The life of Chinese students in Aberdeen was never mentioned in any University publications, such as *Alma Mater*, a student magazine founded in 1883 or *Aberdeen University Review*, a magazine for alumni established in 1913. However Chinese students established their own organisation. The Aberdeen Chinese Students Association (Aberdeen Zhongguo xuesheng hui) came into existence in the years when this group of Hunanese students arrived in the city. Unlike Chinese students in Japan, it produced no publication and did not possess any political nature. However, as individuals, their concern about China's current political affairs never waned. For instance, they all kept contact with Huang Xing and their old acquaintances in the Tongmeng hui. Zhang Shizhao, translator of *Sun Yat-sen* remained on close terms with Sun while staying in Britain, although he refused to join either the Tongmeng hui or later, the Guomindang (The National Party).¹⁰¹ Based on what he learned in Aberdeen, Zhang Shizhao wrote a number of articles which appeared in *Diguo ribao* [帝国日报 Imperial daily] in Beijing in order to introduce the development of constitutional government and political parties in the West to China. These articles

¹⁰¹ According to Zhang himself, Sun Yat-sen appointed Zhang to be his secretary while Sun was in London, but Zhang didn't accept the appointment. See Zhang Shizhao, "Yu Huang Keqiang xiangjiao shimo" (My friendship with Huang Keqiang), p. 142. Huang Keqiang was the courtesy name of Huang Xing.

attracted the attention of those who advocated constitutional government in China, such as Song Jiaoren.¹⁰²

We don't know how long the Aberdeen Chinese students Association existed; however, we know from a letter from Guo Zhiqi to Yang Changji it was still alive in 1915. It was an well-organised group with an elected Chairman and secretary, and formal regulations. The members also included Chinese students from Singapore.¹⁰³ The association probably died along with the ever-declining number of Chinese students in Aberdeen during the period of the World War II.

Yang Changji tried to learn to play tennis and ride a bicycle in 1910, but failed.¹⁰⁴ Travel remained his most favourite hobby. In the summer of 1910 he and Yulin took a holiday at Ballater lodging at Mrs Grant's house. Along the River Dee they visited Burn O'Vat, Lochnagar and Braemar. The beauty of the highlands scene was recorded in six poems written by Yang Yulin. Among them, two were written at Lochnagar in honour of the renowned British poet George Gordon Byron (1788-1824), who spent much of his childhood in Aberdeen and whose story was well remembered by Aberdonians.¹⁰⁵

Yang Yulin's death in August 1911 was the most tragic in the history of Chinese students in Britain. According to Yang Changji, Yulin had suffered from persistent headaches resulting from an accident during his experiments with explosives in Japan. Furthermore, he was depressed at the national crisis through the ever-intensifying encroachment of foreign imperial powers driven by the mighty politics,

¹⁰² The subjects Zhang Shizhao studied included logic, private international law in the first year; constitutional Law and history, political economy (ordinary) and public international law in the secondary year; and English, Moral Philosophy and political economy (honours) in the third year. See *Student Register, Arts, Science & Divinity, 1907 onward*, p. 26. Logic, law and political economy were the main fields Zhang studied. Song clipped these articles and bound them into a book form. When Zhang and Song met each other in Beijing, Song showed Zhang his collection of Zhang's newspaper articles. See Zhang Shizhao, "Yu Huang Keqiang xiangjiao shimo" [My friendship with Huang Xing], p. 142.

¹⁰³ In 1915 Li Xiecheng, studying agriculture and forestry, and Guo Zhiqi were elected as Chairman and secretary respectively. See Yang Changji's *Riji*, entry of 9 March 1915, p. 158. And also Guo Zhiqi, "Huiyi Yang Changji xiansheng" (My recollections of Mr Yang Changji), p. 129. According to Jerome Grieder, in the period 1921-25 the Chinese student population in England was 29 in comparison with 127 in Germany and 89 in France, Grieder does not provide the source of the survey. See his *Intellectuals and the state in Modern China* (1981), p. 210.

¹⁰⁴ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1915), entry of 11 March, p. 159

the betrayal of China by government and the political weakness of the Chinese people. At the same time, a profound regret for having abandoned his study in Japan engulfed him: furthermore, he was dissatisfied with his slow progress in learning English and science. When news of the disastrous failure of a recent uprising in Guangzhou reached him in August, it became the direct reason for his suicide. He travelled to Liverpool and drowned himself in the sea there on 6 August 1911. In his will, he left all his money to Huang Xing for use only in future revolutionary activities.¹⁰⁶ When news of his death arrived in China, it stirred a strong response in the press. Yu Youren (1879-1964), one of Yulin's close friends and editor-in-chief of the *Minli bao* [民立报 people's independence] associated the death of Yulin with the brutal government of the Qing court and transformed this grief into indignation at, and criticism of, the Qing government. Parallels were drawn between Chen Tianhua's suicide in Japan.¹⁰⁷

Once news of success of the 1911 revolution arrived in Aberdeen, Zhang Shizhao abandoned his study and returned to China immediately. He would have obtained his MA degree if he had stayed in Aberdeen for two more academic terms.

Academic tour to Germany

Yang Changji remained in Aberdeen until his graduation in July 1912. Instead of immediately returning to China, he made a research tour to Germany. From Zhang Shizhao's letter we know, that Yang had a tour in Switzerland before arriving at

¹⁰⁵ Yang Yulin's poems were first published in August in *Mingli bao* 民立报 (People's Independence) after his death and some of them were reprinted in *The Tiger* in 1914. See *Mingli bao*, 12 and 23 August 1911 and *The Tiger*, 1.4 (10 Dec. 1914).

¹⁰⁶ Yang Changji, "Daohai leishi Yang jun Shouren shilue" *The Tiger*, 1.4 (1914), reprinted in *Wenji*. See page 30-1. Yang Yulin posted a letter to Wu Zhihui and Shi Ying, when he arrived in Liverpool. Wu and Shi dashed to Liverpool once they got the letter. They organised Yulin's funeral there. Some three hundred Chinese attended, including Yang Changji. See Wu Zhihui, "Yang Shouren xundao gailu" (A brief account of Yang Shouren's sacrifice of his life for the faith), reprinted in Wu Zhihui *xiansheng Quanj*, volume "Miscellany", p. 196-198. Wu suggested burying Yang Yulin in Liverpool instead of China, which won support from Yang Changji. See Yang Changji, *Riji* (1915), entry of 31 March, p. 168. Yang Yulin's epitaph reads, "Zhongguo daohai lieshi Yang Dusheng xiansheng mu" (Mr. Yang Dusheng, a Chinese martyr sinking himself in the sea), see Cai Yuanpei, "Yang Dusheng xiansheng daohai ji" (About Mr Yang Dusheng's suicide by throwing himself into the sea), *Cai Yuanpei xiansheng quanj* [The complete works of Mr Cai Yuanpei] (Taiwan: Commercial Press 1968), p. 582-584.

¹⁰⁷ See *Mingli bao*, [People's Independence] (daily) from 11 August to the end of September, when more than twenty-five articles and condolences appeared. See Sao Xin (penname of Yu Youren)'s "Dao Yang Dusheng wen" (My condolence to Yang Dusheng), *Minli bao*, 18, 27 August and 13 September.

Berlin, where he stayed about ten months.¹⁰⁸ His first contact with German philosophy may have taken place in Japan, however, studying with New idealist James Black Bailie at Aberdeen undoubtedly fostered his interest in German idealistic tradition, in particular Kantian and Neo-Kantian ethics, as is evident in topics he chose for teaching and translation in his days in Changsha. Kant's two *Critiques* - pure reason and practical reason – were included in Yang's translation list after returning to China.¹⁰⁹ We don't know when Yang began to learn German, however, towards the end of his life, reading German formed part of his daily agenda.

Studying the German school system and German educational thought were the main aims of Yang's stay in Germany. It is very likely that during his time in Germany Yang was systematically exposed for the first time to the educational philosophy of Johann Friederich Herbart (1776-1841), one of the most influential philosophers and educational theorist of the nineteenth century. This can be seen in the fact that Herbart's educational theory was a focal point of his lecture on Western education: thought and practice.¹¹⁰

In the spring of 1913 Yang completed his "intellectual journey abroad for seeking world knowledge" and returned home at the age of forty-three. To provide guiding principles for social reform based on an amalgamation between Confucian and Western thoughts marked a new departure in his intellectual journey in the last seven years of his life.

¹⁰⁸ Zhang Shizhao, "Yu Yang Huaizhong shu" (A letter to Yang Huaizhong (namely Yang Changji)). In the editorial note, Zhang wrote, "The letter was written in August 1912." At the beginning of the letter Zhang wrote, "From your letter I have learnt that you came back from Switzerland to Berlin. I have been thinking of how many poems you have written from this travel through the beautiful scenes of foreign lands." Zhang published the letter in *The Tiger Weekly*, on 13 March 1926, vol 1, no. 33. In his diary of 22 Feb 1915 Yang Changji wrote, "I have stayed in Berlin for ten months." See *Riji* (1915), p. 151.

¹⁰⁹ In a letter to Zhang Shizhao in 1915 Yang wrote, "The works I am translating include Spencer's *Ethics*, *Sociology* and *System of Synthetic Philosophy*, Kant's *Critique of pure reason* and *Critique of practical reason*, etc. Of course I cannot complete them in a short time. I will spend a certain time on the translation every day and take it as my life-long task." The letter was published in *The Tiger*, 1.8 (10 August 1915).

¹¹⁰ Yang Changji, "Jiaoyuxue jiangyi" (Lecture notes of education), *Wenji*, pp. 100-197.

PART III

Teacher: Solitary career, sacred vocation
Days in Changsha and Beijing, 1913-1920

Chapter 7

Conservative Currents: Confucianism, Culturalism and Traditionalism

The New Republic

In the spring of 1913 Yang Changji returned home. The 1911 Revolution had overthrown the Manchu Emperor, and put an end to the monarchical system which had ruled China for more than two thousand years. However, the revolution had not provided a quick solution to China's problems. The fifteen years following the 1911 Revolution were characterised by a move away from the construction of a democratic system towards centralising dictatorship, restoration of the monarchical system, militarism and warlordism, as well as continued and increasing incursion from foreign imperialist powers. The government became weaker and more corrupt and the Chinese people suffered even greater poverty.

The republic was almost stillborn. The ideal of a strong and prosperous people's sovereign nation was receding further and further, largely due to Yuan Shikai's (1859-1916) betrayal of the revolution.¹ Yuan, who had been an important official at the end of the Qing dynasty and was the founder of the Chinese New Army and was, moreover, a pragmatic and experienced politician, had gained the presidency of the new Republic in March 1912. Although recognised as a "progressive" official among the Qing mandarins, he had never been committed to the republican ideal of a democratic government.

In his way of seeking centralising and strengthening his personal power the constitutional government designed by the revolutionaries provided the greatest check to Yuan's attempt.

¹ The fundamental weakness within the revolutionary party was another important factor which allowed Yuan to direct the course of Chinese politics towards a centralising dictatorship, as Ernest Young and Joseph W. Esherick argue in "Politics in the aftermath of revolution: the era of Yuan Shih-k'ai, 1912-16" and *Reform and Revolution in China* (1976) respectively.

The Guomindang (GMD) or Nationalist Party, which had formed around the Tongmeng hui core through absorbing four other small parties in August 1912, won a clear majority in both the Upper and Lower Houses in the first national election. The assassination of Song Jiaoren, 宋教仁 (1882-1913), who had assumed a prominent role in GMD's election campaign on Yuan's order in March 1913 was a reflection of the irreconcilable conflict between Yuan and the GMD, which stemmed from an underlying ideological abyss. Yuan was determined to transform both cabinet and parliament into mere figureheads. His next move was to arrange the so-called "Reorganisation Loan" from the Five Foreign Power Banking Consortium without submitting it to parliament for ratification. On the one hand, Yuan ordered Duan Qirui 段祺瑞 (1865-1936), his acting premier, to send troops to surround the parliament building, on the other hand, he invested as much money as he could to bribe members of the parliament in order to obstruct his own impeachment. He moved quickly to dismiss the Nationalist military governors in Jiangxi, Guangdong and Anhui and mobilised his own troops to occupy these Southern provinces, thus setting the so-called "Second Revolution" in motion. In response, Li Liejun 李烈鈞 (1882-1946), the military governor of Jiangxi, declared the provincial independence of the Beijing government and in less than a month six other provinces in the South had followed suit. Hunan was one of them, although Tan Yankai 譚延凱 (1879-1930), the province's civil-military governor, supported constitutionalism and became involved only reluctantly. On 12th July 1913 the war that became known as the "Second Revolution" broke out.² It was just a few months after Yang's return home.

Hunan after the Second Revolution

In the years immediately following the 1911 Revolution, Hunan suffered the turmoil and chaos of wars. The uncertain politics caused a recurrent change of governors and provincial institutions. In a short period of seven years after the revolution of 1911 until the summer of 1918 when Yang Changji left Hunan for Beijing University, the governorship changed hands five times. As A. McDonald has described, each

² This brief account of the political situation in the first year after the establishment of Republican China is based on Li Jiannong's *The Political History of China, 1840-1928* (1956), Immanuel C. Y. Hsü's *The Rise of Modern China* (1995, 5th edition) and Ernest P. Young's "Politics in the aftermath

succession was accomplished either by battle or by general war. At the same time, there were frequent secret society uprisings and outbreaks of banditry. Each governor possessed jurisdiction and power only within a narrow area.³ The geographical location turned Hunan into a battlefield. Being athwart the country's main military thoroughfare, Hunan was a place over which the northern Beiyang military clique and the armies of the southern provinces including Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou and Yunnan contended. The north regarded Hunan as a gangway for conquering the southern provinces, while the south saw Hunan as its front line for an advance northward. Therefore, both north and south took turns moving into Hunan. The damage inflicted upon the people of Hunan from these conflicts was extremely extensive.⁴

The Second Revolution was quickly suppressed by Yuan and the northern Beiyang Army. Tang Xiangming, a foreign trained officer of the Beiyang military clique, was appointed to replace Tan Yankai. On the orders of Yuan Shikai, Tang started to uproot the Nationalist Party in Hunan. Sixteen former members of Tan's government, who were all local elite and opposed to Yuan, were arrested, including Yang Delin (杨德麟), Yang Yulin's brother and treasurer of the Hunan government. Yang Changji risked his life to take part in an attempt to rescue him, but all the efforts failed and Yang Delin and fifteen others were executed on 13th October 1913.

⁵ In order to destroy the Nationalist Party in Hunan completely and to mute any dissenting voice Tang implemented a sanguinary rule and high terror. During his three-year tenure in Hunan, thousands of people were killed, and he was cursed by Hunanese as "Butcher Tang" (汤屠夫 *Tang tufu*).⁶

Zhang Shizhao, who had played a significant part in the organisation of the Nationalist Party's "punishment campaign against Yuan," went into exile in Japan,

of revolution: the era of Yuan Shih-k'ai, 1912-16," *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 12, *Republican China, 1912-1949* (1983).

³ A. McDonald, *The urban origins of rural revolution*, p. 19.

⁴ Li Rui, *The early revolutionary activities of Mao Tse-tung*, pp. 46-7.

⁵ *Hunan JBN*, p. 336. Wang Xingguo, *Yang Changji de shengping ji sixiang*, p. 69.

⁶ One month after Yuan's death became known, Tang scuttled out of the back door of the governor's building on the evening of 4th July 1916. *Hunan JBN*, p. 336-8; Li Jui, *The Early revolutionary activities of Mao Tse-tung*, p. 46-7. A. McDonald, *The urban origin of the rural revolution*, p. 26-7.

where he founded *Jiayin zazhi* (甲寅杂志 *The Tiger*) in May 1914.⁷ He published a large number of articles popularising the idea of a two-party system and federalism, and printed letters from such notable figures as Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao and Wu Zhihui. Soon *The Tiger* became one of the most significant forums for criticism of Yuan's autocracy and monarchical movement and gained great popularity and influence among Chinese intellectuals, largely through the logical clarity of Zhang's essays.

Yang Du, another member of the Hunanese elite and one of Yang Changji's old acquaintances, became a rising but short-lived political star active in the organisation of Yuan Shikai's campaign for enthronement as China's emperor.⁸ This movement for the restoration of the monarchy, though it only came out into the open in the latter half of 1915, was based on Yuan's long-running moves to institute a centralising dictatorship and reaffirm Confucianism as state ideology. In January 1914 he dissolved the first parliament of the Republic and cancelled the constitution of 1912. Although in February 1914 Yuan ordered the whole country to worship Heaven and Confucius formally and instructed schools to put the Confucian classics into the curriculum, at the same time, he rejected Kang Youwei's proposal for the establishment of Confucianism as "state religion" and for a religious clause in the Republican constitution. He concluded the humiliating treaty "Twenty-one Demands" with Japan in May 1915 without the consent of the legislature. Yang Du played a leading and decisive role in forming the Peace Planning Society (筹安会 Chouanhui) in August 1915 and in directing the ideological preparation for Yuan's enthronement. Some of Hunan's leading figures were involved in the so-called popular "petition" calling for Yuan to assume the emperorship.

⁷ Zhang persuaded Ceng Chunxuan (1861-1933), the former governor-general of Sichuan, and Guangdong and Guangxi and a long-term political rival of Yuan Shikai, to join the campaign against Yuan, but his attempt to convince Li Yuanhong in Wuchang ended in failure. Appointed secretary general to Huang Xing's revolutionary army by Sun Yat-sen, he came to Nanjing. He was the real author of the "Manifesto of the punitive expedition against Yuan Shikai." See Zhang Shizhao, "Yu Huang Keqiang xianjiao shimo," Bai Ji'an's biographical account "Zhang Shizhao" and Howard Boorman, et al., *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, 1:106-7.

⁸ In 1914 when Yang Changji heard that Yang Du had been appointed to supervise the development of commerce in Hankou, Yang Changji wrote to Yang Du to encourage him to devote himself to promoting China's enterprise by citing the historical examples of Confucius, Guan Zhong and Shang Yang who, it was claimed, were talented not only in politics but also in economics. Yang Changji believed that economical development was crucial for the regeneration of China. See *Yang*

Confucianism: Philosophical system or state religion?

The first nationwide intellectual controversy encountered by Yang Changji after his return to China in 1913 was the debate over Confucianism as a religion, a debate which went far beyond its original limitations to take on three dimensions: political, religious and intellectual. Politically, the debate became involved with a movement, launched by the Confucian Society (孔教会 Kongjiaohui) headed by Chen Huanzhang 陈焕章 (1881-1931), a graduate of Columbia University and disciple of Kang Youwei, to institutionalize Confucianism as a state religion. The journal *Kongjia hui zazhi* [Journal of the Confucian Society] and Kang's journal *Buren* [Unbearable] and *Yongyan* [Justice] were the main forum for this group of Chinese intellectuals.⁹ The petition to parliament for the legalisation of Confucianism as the state religion in the first Chinese constitution in 1913 gained strong support from certain prominent Chinese intellectuals including Yan Fu and Xia Zengyou 夏曾佑 (1865-1924) and even foreign scholars like Reginald F. Johnston, the English tutor of the last emperor, Pu Yi (溥仪 1909-1967).¹⁰ The campaign played a significant role in Yuan Shikai's movement for the restoration of the monarchy (1914-16).

Religiously, the debate covered such fundamental questions as, "Is Confucianism a religion?" "Is religion necessary in modern life?"¹¹ It also triggered a general anti-religious, but not anti-faith, movement (from 1917 onward) – which called for opposition to institutional religion, emancipation from superstitions and sacramentarianism, criticism of Christianity and advocacy of science and rationality.¹²

Changji riji [Diary of Yang Changji], 15 Nov. 1914 p. 115. For Yang Du see chapter 4 and Boorman's *Biographical dictionary of republican China*, 4:13-16.

⁹ Under Kang Youwei's influence, Chen Huanzhang organised a Confucian Society in New York in 1907 and the Confucian Society in Shanghai in 1912 and in Beijing in 1913. The first issue of the monthly organisational journal *Kongjiao hui zazhi* [Journal of Confucian Society] was published in February 1913. See Chan Wing-tsit, *Religious Trends in modern China* (N.Y.: Columbia University Press) 1953, pp. 6-7. (Hereafter, *Religious Trends*) *Buren* [Unbearable], a monthly, was founded by Kang Youwei and his disciples Chen Xunyi and Mai Dinghua in February 1913 in Shanghai. See *Zhongguo jindaishi cidian* [Dictionary of modern history of China], (Shanghai) 1982, p. 53.

¹⁰ Chan Wing-tsit, *Religious Trends*, pp. 7-8.

¹¹ Liu Chun-jo, *Controversies in modern Chinese intellectual history: An analytic bibliography of periodical articles, mainly of the May Fourth and post-May Fourth era*, Cambridge Mass., Harvard University Press, 1964, p. 100.

¹² Chan Wing-tsit, *Religious Trends*, pp.219-242.

In the intellectual aspect, Confucianism, as a philosophical and spiritual system which had maintained absolute dominance in China's thought and faith for more than two thousand years, was faced with a serious challenge. A general discussion on the nature and authenticity of Confucianism, and its position and function in Chinese history and culture in comparison with Western religions, raised the curtain on the opposition to Confucianism that was to feature prominently in the New Culture and the May Fourth movements.

The movement for the institutionalisation of Confucianism as a state religion can be traced back to Kang Youwei's reform campaign of 1895. The "protection of faith" (保教 *baojiao*) formed the core of Kang's reform blueprint for the protection of China as a nation (保国 *baoguo*) against the threat of becoming a mere colony of the Western powers. As Chan Wing-tsit pointed out, from the very beginning, the general sentiment among the Chinese intellectuals and scholars was overwhelmingly averse to the introduction of a state religion.¹³ The opposing camp consisted not only of prominent Confucian scholars such as Zhang Binlin, a pioneer of the promotion of non-Confucian philosophies and a leading figure of the revolutionary republican movement; and Wang Guowei, who was opposed vehemently both to Kang's treatment of philosophy as a servant-girl of politics and condemned his efforts to make Confucianism the state religion as "smacking of pantheism," but also Liang Qichao. The divergence of views over Confucianism as a state religion between the two men became one of the main reasons for Liang's departure from his teacher.¹⁴

Kang Youwei never gave up his conviction that religion and democracy were two wheels of the same cart of a wealthy and powerful nation-state.¹⁵ As mentioned above, the campaign for the recognition of Confucianism as a state religion gained its momentum right after the establishment of the Republic, as a result of the efforts of Chen Huanzhang. Chinese liberal intellectuals such as Chen Duxiu, Zhang Shizhao,

¹³ Ibid., p. 9

¹⁴ For Wang Guowei's criticism of Kang Youwei, see Wang's "Jinnian zhi xueshu jie" (1905) (The scholarly world in recent years) in his *Jing'an wenji* [Anthology of Jing'an] (1940), p. 95a. For Liang Qichao's criticism of making Confucianism into a state religion see his "Baojiao feisuoyi zun Kong lun" (To 'save the faith' is not the way to revere Confucianism), *Xinmin congbao* [New Citizen], 1.2 (22 Feb. 1902):59-72.

¹⁵ Charlotte Furth, "Intellectual Change: from the reform movement to the May Fourth Movement, 1895-1920," *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 12, p. 366

Cai Yuanpei, Chang Naite, Yi Basha, and Gao Yihan, used journals such as *New Youth*, *The Tiger*, *Eastern Miscellany* and *Taipingyang* [太平洋 *The Pacific Ocean*] to launch harsh criticism of Confucianism. Among these journals, *The Tiger* was the first journal to repudiate the petition for recognising Confucianism as state cult.¹⁶ Confucian loyalists led by Liang Qichao, Lan Gongwu and Wu Guanyin expressed the opposite view in *Da Zhonghua* [大中华 *Great Chung Hwa Maganzine [sic]*].

Yang was actively involved in the debate. In 1915 he published an article in *The Tiger* entitled “Zongjiao lun” (On religion) in which he expressed his determined opposition to the petition for a religious clause in the Republican constitution. Yang Changji had a long-standing interest in religious problems partly because of his great interest in philosophy. The article was based on his consideration of Chinese religious problems and the spiritual role of Confucianism during the period of study abroad on which he had elaborated in his diaries of 1914.¹⁷ In the same year he published his lecture notes *Lunyu leichao* [Classified *Analects* with annotation and commentaries], which included a single chapter on “religious problems,” Yang being of the view that the introduction of Confucian attitudes towards certain fundamental religious ideas such as God, Heaven, spirits, and the relationship between belief and human life for both his students in particular, and Chinese readers in general, was of supreme importance.¹⁸ The article focused on questions such as whether Confucianism was a religion, the nature of religion, and whether religion was necessary for the modernisation of China, which were the central issues of the Confucian religion debate. Through the analysis of the central meanings and function of Confucianism, in comparison with other religions such as Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, Yang maintained that the debate on whether Confucianism was a religion was unnecessary, and even asserted that the campaign to include a religious clause in the Republican Constitution was absurd.

¹⁶ Yang Changji published “Songjiao lun” (On religion) under the pen name “CZY sheng” in vol. 1 issue 6, 1915 *The Tiger*. Liu Chun-jo’s classified bibliographic survey shows that during the period from 1914 to 1915, precisely from the first issue, *The Tiger*, published by Zhang Shizhao in Tokyo vehemently attacked Kang Youwei and Chen Huanzhang’s campaign for the legalisation of Confucianism as state religion. After 1916 *New Youth* became an important forum of criticism. *Pacific Ocean* was active from 1917 onwards. See the section 4.1 and 4.8 pp.100-115, 160-164.

¹⁷ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), entries of 28, 29, 30 of May, pp. 34-6.

¹⁸ *Lunyu leichao* was first published in book form in 1914 by Hongwen Tushushe in Changsha and is reprinted in *Yang Changji wenji*. For the chapter on “Religious Problems” see pp. 75-80.

Yang held that, in a narrow sense, Confucianism was not a religion, because, firstly, Buddhists, Christian and Muslims deified their ‘creators of teachings’ (教主 *jiaozhu*) as gods to worship, while Confucius was worshipped only as a person. Secondly, there was no church and clergy in the Confucian tradition. Confucian Temples (文庙 *wenmiao*) existed solely for Confucian literati to perform ceremonies of school opening. Thirdly, a Confucian was also allowed to worship Buddha or to invite Taoist priests to host funeral rituals, which was very different from the monotheistic system and practice of the world’s main religions. And finally, Confucius disapproved of “serving spiritual beings” and emphasised this-worldliness.¹⁹

However, in a broad sense, Confucianism could also be defined as a religious system, Yang wrote, because its religiousness or spirituality, was undoubtedly indefinable. First of all, “Confucius has been revered by Chinese people for more than two thousand years, this is sufficient for him to be considered as a “creator of a religious teaching.” Our people have established the institution of the Confucian temple, therefore we have to admit the fact that Confucius has been worshipped as a half-human and half-supernatural being (半人半神 *banren banshen*).” It was true that “Confucius emphasised the ideal of human life,” while ignoring questions concerning superhuman power and spiritual beings (鬼神 *guishen*). For instance, “Confucius maintained, ‘Devote yourself earnestly to the duties due to men, and respect spiritual beings, but keep them at a distance.’ ‘If we are not yet able to serve man, how can we serve spiritual beings?’ ‘Confucius seldom talked about destiny (命 *ming* or the Mandate of Heaven).’ And ‘Confucius never discussed ... spiritual beings.’²⁰

On the other hand, however, Yang argued further, “our country has its own characteristics of spirit of religion which can be seen in Confucius’ other sayings such as ‘The coming of spiritual beings cannot be surmised. How much less can we grow tired of them?’”²¹ His arguments for religiousness in the Confucian tradition

¹⁹ Chen Duxiu shared the last arguments for not defining Confucianism as a religion in his writings during 1916 and 1917.

²⁰ See *Analects*, 6.20, 11.11, 7.34, 7.20, and 9.1. For the English translation see Chan Win-tsit, *A source book*, pp. 30, 32, 33, 34 and 36.

²¹ Yang Changji, “Zongjiao lun” [On religion], p. 3, cited from chapter 16 of the *Doctrine of the Mean*. For the English translation see Chan Wing-tsit, *A source book*, p. 120. Legge’s translation is

were intensified through his discussion in his lecture on Confucius' *Analects* of the Confucian concepts of Heaven (天 *tian*), the Lord on High (上帝 *shangdi* or God) and spiritual and supernatural beings (鬼神 *gui shen*). He stated that "the existence of spiritual beings is a fundamental philosophical question. People who have faith usually acknowledge inwardly the existence of the Lord on High." However, the Confucian definition of the Lord on High was different from the Western one. "In China," Yang went on, " 'What Heaven imparts to man is called human nature.' The greatness of the Way originates in Heaven. That is what is meant by the idea of the Lord on High. These are also the core ideas of [Confucian] ethics. Christians in Western countries also believe in the Lord on High (or God), but they believe Jesus to be the embodiment of the Lord on High (or God). Chinese worship the Lord on High without knowing of Jesus." As to the identity of Jesus, Yang claimed, "When I studied in Aberdeen, Jesus and God were common subjects discussed by me and my colleagues who were devoted Christians. I told them that Jesus died for religious teaching and established one of the most influential religions in the world. I honour and adore him. However I continue to regard him as a great figure, not a God."²²

Yang disagreed with the interpretation of the Confucian concept of the Heaven made by Herbert Giles, professor in Chinese at Cambridge University, who held that Heaven for Confucius was not an anthropomorphic concept. "In his book *Zhongguo zhi wenhua* [*The civilization of China*]," Yang wrote, "Professor Giles maintains that in ancient Chinese religious thought Heaven was initially understood in an anthropomorphic sense. This view underwent a change after Confucius refused to ascribe a personality to Heaven, instead identifying Heaven with abstract laws (抽象法则 *chouxiangfaze*)."²³ Taking Confucius' saying in *Analects*, that "when you have offended against Heaven, there is nowhere you can turn to in your prayers," Yang countered with the question, "If Heaven is impersonal, what is the saying 'offending against Heaven' about?"²⁴ Confucius says that 'He who knows me, is that

"The approaches of the spirits, you cannot surmise; - and can you treat them with indifference?" p. 398.

²² Yang Changji, "Lunyu leichao," *Wenji*, p. 76.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

²⁴ For the English translation of Confucius' quotation see D. C. Lau, p. 69.

not Heaven?’ If Heaven is impersonal, how can it understand Confucius?”²⁵ Yang asserted that “Heaven has been understood in an anthropomorphic sense in China from the past to the present. ... It is only because Heaven has human qualities (人格 *renge*), that men have a moral duty towards Heaven. The sense of duty is a necessary element of morality. ... Even Zhu Xi’s position that ‘Heaven is principle’ (理 *li*), on which Professor Giles’ argument is based, should not necessarily be understood as a denial of Heaven having human qualities.”²⁶ It is clear that Yang emphasised an anthropomorphic view of the Western concept of God and the Chinese concept of Heaven. That enabled him to bridge the gap between these two fundamental concepts.

On the basis of equating the Western concept of God with the Chinese concept of Heaven, Yang proposed another important argument, that is, the idea that “paying reverence to Heaven and loving people” (敬天愛人 *jingtian airen*) constituted the central meaning of Confucianism, was equal to the principal tenets of Christianity.²⁷ In addition to the ontological dimension, Confucianism had also undeniable practical religious elements, as was evident in its various sacrificial rituals. From the point of view of terminology Yang argued further, “*Kongjiao* (Confucianism in the religious sense) has become a term in the vocabulary of every country. When I was in Germany, all Chinese were required by the authority to complete a police registration form, which included a section on belief. All Chinese wrote down Confucianist (孔教徒 *Kongjiao tu*). That Chinese believe in Confucianism has been already recognised by the laws of other countries. Therefore if one obstinately argues that Confucianism is not a religion, what he is arguing is actually not worth disputing over.” “What is under dispute is merely a play with words that has nothing to do with the substantial facts.”²⁸

As shown above, Yang held that the arguments of both sides were tenable. On the one hand, one could not ignore the historical facts and refuse to consider

²⁵ For the English translation of Confucius’ saying see Legge, footnote for chapter 37, Book 14, p.289.

²⁶ Yang Changji, “Lunyu leichao,” in *Wenji*, pp. 76-7.

²⁷ Yang stated “Reverence to Heaven and loving people are natural principles of the Way of human beings (人道 *rendao*). It is a universal truth.” See “Zongjiao lun” p. 3. Yang reiterated this point in his lecture on Confucius’ *Analects*. See his “Lunyu leichao,” *Wenji*, p. 76.

²⁸ Yang Changji, “Zongjiao lun,” p. 2, 5.

Confucianism as a religion, on the other hand, one had to admit that Confucianism was very different from the world's other great religious systems. Therefore, it could not be defined as a religion. One of the chief reasons for the controversy, Yang believed, was the various different understandings and definitions of the concept "religion." As for the characteristics of Chinese religions, Yang pointed out, "Chinese sages emphasised religious spirit (宗教之精神 *zongjiao zhi jingshen*) rather than religious service and rituals."²⁹ He took Confucius' attitudes towards prayer as an example: according to Confucius, "man should be always aware of Heaven being above (对越在天 *duiyue zaitian*), and if one's words and deeds always follow the heavenly principle, Heaven will certainly protect him. Therefore, there is no need to pray. ... Confucius instructs that superior men should establish the human Way while keeping away from spiritual beings. This is the essence of the moral philosophy of our ancient sages and worthies."³⁰

Yang's argument that Confucianism emphasised the religious spirit rather than religious service and rituals was based on his understanding of religion, which was profoundly influenced by a British scholar named Feisituo.³¹ In his "Zongjiao lun" Yang cited at some length Feisituo's discussion regarding the definition of religion and the distinctiveness of Confucian religion as both supplement and support to his own arguments. Feisituo held,

There were several reasons why the yellow people have refused to recognise Confucianism as a religion; one being that they do not know what a religion is. In ancient China there was no such concept as religion (宗教 *zongjiao*).³²

Feisituo did not deny the existence of religious phenomena in the history of Chinese culture. He argued that Confucianism was a religion that paid no attention to religious form in the Western sense.

²⁹ Yang Changji, "Lunyu leichao," in *Wenji*, p. 78.

³⁰ In his *Zongjiao lun*, Yang just cited one sentence "In that case I have long been offering my prayers" from chapter 34, Book 7 of *Analects*. For the full quotation and commentary see his "Lunyu leichao," in *Wenji*, pp. 77-8.

³¹ Yang wrote, "I have just read a work by a British man named Feisituo (斐斯脱) referring to the nature of Confucianism, which was translated into Chinese by Huang Yanke." See "Zongjiao lun", p. 5. The author of this study has checked all the journals mentioned by Yang during this period, such *Da Zhonghua*, *Yongyan* and *The Tiger*, but found nothing. So the real identity of Feisituo remains unknown.

³² Yang Changji, "Zongjiao lun," p. 4

Religion is a force that is definitely formless (绝对的无形 *jueduide wuxing*), its function is to foster people's morality and promote good political life. ... The reason for religion performing as a force without form is because it has a system of metaphysical principles and ideas (无形的义理 *wuxingde yili*), which control mankind's spiritual life. Therefore, form is not essential to religion. A religion with a form cannot be considered as being superior to a religion without form. A religion that exists only in form cannot be called a religion. ... The believers of most religions take prayer and worship on bending knees as religious form, while Confucians stress earnestly and sincerely practice the humanistic principles of "doing one's best" (忠 *zhong*) and "altruism" (恕 *shu*), which they take as their religious form.³³

As to what a national religion is, Feisituo went on, a national religion was that

Which can mould and cultivate the morality of a whole nation, maintain social customs and moral codes and control people's minds and the spirit of a nation. It does not matter whether the doctrine is superficial or profound; whether it worships gods or men, what is important is whether it can provide a unitary teaching.³⁴

Another distinct point which Yang praised highly was Feisituo's discussion of what constitutes an advanced religion. Feisituo divided religions into three levels according to the degree to which permeation of a religious teaching rested upon its form.

A religion of the highest level can "completely satisfy the inner requirements, while ignoring the outer form. It has achieved the spirit (神 *shen*), while ignoring the form (形 *xing*). That which has obtained the spirit is not necessary to be asked when seeking a [perfect] appearance (形 *xing*). That which has obtained the perfect appearance is perhaps lacking spirit. ... [Its faith] can be known without publicising and can be practised without being ordered about. Its power of transformation and influence is profound (渥 *wo*) and extensive (周 *zhou*). A religion of the second level makes its teaching known with the aid of publicity and its practice needs encouragement. A religion of the lowest level glosses its form and glorifies its achievements. Because its teaching is forced and its practice is adorned, its transformation is not profound and its influence is not extensive.³⁵

Yang remarked, "Feisituo's argument that Confucianism has no religious form, yet reaches the highest level because it does not pay attention to form, gives an exceptional insight into our knowledge of religion."³⁶

³³ Ibid., p. 5

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 6

³⁶ Ibid.

As shown above, Yang recognised Confucianism as a religious system of thought, since, although it had no religious forms, it shared the essential characteristics of the world's other great religions. This view was very close to Zhang Dongsun, a Confucian loyalist trained in German philosophy, who supported the view of Confucianism as a religion. Zhang declared that both from the points of view of a definition of "religion" and the historical position of Confucianism in the Chinese tradition, "Confucianism is without question a religion."³⁷ At the same time Yang also cherished Feisituo's evolutionary view of religion which allowed for Confucianism, which paid much regard to rationality instead of believing in supernatural power and superstitions, to be recognised as an advanced form of religious belief.

As to the fundamental issue of whether religion could benefit the modernization of China and was necessary to modern life, Yang replied in the affirmative stating "Religion is good for [the cultivation of] people's minds." Yang held that human nature and feeling required faith, and felt that, taking the history of Western civilization into account, religion had played a decisive role in bringing people together and maintaining the unity of nation.³⁸ Nevertheless, at the same time, Yang was fully aware of the fatal weakness of the Western church system, which he condemned for the encouragement of sectarianism which had been recognised as the root cause of wars and political turmoil of the Middle Ages. He denounced the Western church and stated that Confucianism, as a tolerant and humanistic religion, had avoided this shortcoming.³⁹ Therefore, Yang, like Zhang Dongsun (张东荪), believed that Confucianism had proved itself fully competent for the present pressing task of saving people's minds from degeneration. In a article published in 1913, Yang declared that, "Recently, the petition for making Confucianism as a state religion has become a hot issue. Confucian moral philosophy has been revered and believed for more than two thousand years, and has been actually recognised as a state religion. As to whether Confucianism as a state religion should become a clause in the constitution, that is another matter. What I expect is that Confucian teachings

³⁷ Zhang Dongsun, "Yu zhi Kongjiao guan" (My view of Confucianism), *Yongyan* [Justice], 1.15(July 1913):8.

³⁸ Yang Changji, "Zongjiao lun," pp. 4-5, and *Riji*, (1914), entry of 18 March, p. 26.

³⁹ Yang Changji, "Zongjiao lun," pp. 3, 5.

can be carried out in our country in order both to bring back to health those social customs that have been corrupted and to correct people's minds."⁴⁰

It should be noted that defining Confucianism as a belief system and recognising the value of religion in modern life by no means signified support for Kang Youwei's campaign to make Confucianism a state religion. In fact Yang expressed his opposition to such a move in his article "Zongjiao lun" and other writings of that time. He remarked that the attempt to establish Confucianism as a state religion was merely a kind of lacquer, that would easily be held up to ridicule. His arguments against the adoption of Confucianism as a state religion were based on Western liberal view on religion. He held that "the state should not interfere in people's freedom of religious belief. ... If the state forces people to believe in Confucianism, there is nothing to be gained except unnecessary political struggle."⁴¹ Furthermore, it would violate the principle of treating religious sects equally.⁴² It should be noted that other opponents of Confucianism, such as Chen Duxiu, shared these views which became amongst the most forceful arguments against the campaign for the institutionalisation of the Confucian religion.⁴³ Yang also repudiated discrete suggestions, firstly to use Christianity in China, and secondly, to promote a Confucian church in order to resist the further encroachment of the foreign church in China. "I do not agree with those who wish to save China by means of Christianity. I also believe that it is superfluous to attempt to fight Christianity with Confucianism."⁴⁴ Therefore, for Yang the issue was not whether Confucianism was a religion, but how to spread the true spirit of Confucianism in order to "bring back to health those social customs that have been corrupted and to correct people's minds." Such a view determined Yang's attitude towards another important issue, namely, the

⁴⁰ Yang Changji, "Yu guiguo hou duiyu jiaoyu zhi suogan," *Hunan Journal of Education*, no. 17 (1913) and no. 3,4 (1914) in *Wenji*, p. 53.

⁴¹ Yang Changji, "Zongjiao lun," pp. 3, 5.

⁴² Yang Changji, "Yu guiguo hou duiyu jiaoyu zhi sogan" *Hunan Journal of Education*, no. 17 (1913) and no. 3,4 (1914) in *Wenji*, p. 53.

⁴³ Chen Duxiu's arguments against making Confucianism into a state religion were mainly expressed in his writings during the period between October 1916 and January 1917. A summary of Chen's main arguments against Confucian religion can be found in Chan Win-tsit's *Religious Trends in modern China*, p. 6 and Chow Tse-tsung's "Anti-Confucianism in early Republican China," pp. 298-9.

⁴⁴ Yang Changji, "Zongjiao lun," p. 5.

“study of Confucian classics” (读经 *dujing*) in school education, one of the cardinal proposals of Kang’s petitions for Confucianism as a state religion.

Kang Youwei and his followers felt the study of the Confucian classics to be essential for the future of Chinese culture, believing that Confucianism was a crystallisation of Chinese culture, and accordingly, that the refusal to assert Confucianism as state religion would mean a denial of Chinese culture.⁴⁵ This suggestion met with strong opposition from anti-Confucian intellectuals, such as Chen Duxiu, who held that Confucianism did not represent the entire Chinese culture, and that Confucian moral principles, the product of the monarchic period of Chinese history, could not be used to serve twentieth-century republicanism.⁴⁶ Another point made by Chen was that to order students to read Confucianism violated the principle of freedom of thought. Chen thought that no single theory could be regarded as the sole truth.⁴⁷ Along with the issue of “reverence to Confucianism” (尊孔 *zun Kong*), the issue of the study of the Confucian classics became a prologue to the large-scaled anti-Confucian campaign in the pre-May Fourth Movement period.⁴⁸ In 1913, Yang Changji provided a sophisticated compromise in the form of a mild criticism of Kang’s lobbying for the study of the Confucian classics in the national curriculum of schools.⁴⁹

Yang declared “I agree with the spirit of Kang Nanhai (namely, Kang Youwei)’s suggestion for the study of the Confucian classics.” Based on his dichotomous view of the nation, Yang held that intellectual culture, which represented the spirit of a nation, was the foundation and source from which the development of material culture of a nation derived. In this regard, modern Western history provided the best example. Yang argued that the “rise of modern Western civilisation was firmly based on the Renaissance and Enlightenment movements.”⁵⁰ Moreover, none of the Western countries had abandoned its intellectual heritage. Latin remained in the

⁴⁵ See Chan Win-tsit, *Religious Trends in modern China*, p. 6

⁴⁶ Chow Tse-tsung, “Anti-Confucianism in early Republican China,” p. 298.

⁴⁷ Chen Duxiu, “Da Wu Yu” (My reply to Wu Yu), *New Youth*, 2.4 (Dec. 1916):4.

⁴⁸ The issue of the study of the Confucian classics in school re-emerged in the mid-1930s. See Liu Chunjo, pp. 59-62.

⁴⁹ Yang Changji, “Yu guiguo hou duiyu jiaoyu zhi sogan” *Hunan Journal of Education*, no. 17 (1913) and no. 3,4 (1914), *Wenji*, p. 53.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 54.

curricula of schools in Western countries. Therefore, there was no reason for Chinese to oppose the teachings of the Chinese classics in the nation's schools.

Nevertheless, at the same time Yang spoke in favour of the decision by the republican government to remove the study of classics from the national curriculum. "In the late Qing, [the court] issued a decree promoting the study of the Confucian classics (读经 *dujing*) and reverence to Confucius (尊孔 *zun Kong*). In the republican era, the study of the Confucian classics has been removed from school curricula; however, this by no means represents the banning of Confucianism. There are pedagogic reasons behind the decision."⁵¹ Yang's explanation of these reasons can be summarised as: (1) Classics, such as the *Book of History* and the *Book of Changes*, which are written in ancient language and whose meanings are abstruse, are not suitable teaching material; (2) Times have changed, so some ancient ideas and principles (古义 *guyi*) are inevitably out-of-date; (3), it is well known that the civil service examination system, which was dominated by the study of the Confucian Four Books and the Five Classics, was one of the root sources of the social evils and corrupted practices of the past; (4) In the West, for example, in Britain, education takes an equal stance towards every religious belief and sect. All state schools follow a principle that no doctrine of one single religious sect should predominate. If China were to force Confucianism to be taught in schools, the principle of equality would be violated; (5) finally, from the psychological point of view, if texts are too difficult to apprehend, pupils will grow bored with the Confucian classics. It is really harmful for the future transmission of Confucianism. "It is a matter of people's minds (人心 *renxin*) and the morals of the age (世道 *shidao*)."⁵²

Clearly, Yang was in a dilemma. On the one hand, he held that intellectual culture was the source of the social and political progress of a nation, and that this culture could not cut off its natural link with traditional Chinese heritage in general and Confucianism in particular. Furthermore, Yang continued to believe that Confucianism was a universal truth and took it as the source of his spiritual life. Therefore, he supported the study of Confucianism. On the other hand, taking

⁵¹ Ibid.

China's situation and new values into account, he had to be in agreement with the call for the abolition of the study of the Confucian classics in schools. In this case Yang proposed a compromise. He called for the promotion of the study of classical Chinese prose and literature in schools, while suggesting that teaching materials should be carefully selected from well-known and easily read historical and literal works including Confucian classics such as *Mencius*, the *Book of Odes*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals with Zuo Qiuming's annotations*.⁵³

The campaign for Confucianism as a state religion ended soon after the death of Yuan Shikai in 1916 and the failure of his movement for the restoration of monarchy. However, certain themes of the controversy referring to such fundamental questions as how to treat the national cultural heritage, the nature and value of Confucianism and whether faith or philosophy of life were necessary for the modernisation of China remained at the centre of the succeeding intellectual debates of the 1920s, 30s and 40s.

The involvement in the dispute over Confucian religion marked a significant development in Yang's thought, for it provided a new angle for Yang to reappraise the nature and role of Confucianism. He believed in Confucianism not only as a set of philosophical truths, but also as a living faith. Yang's arguments for Confucianism as a higher level of religion and for freedom of religious belief, formed the core of his criticism of the campaign for making Confucianism into a state religion. His case revealed one of the ways in which Western concepts and values were assimilated by Confucianism in the early years of the republican period.

Cultural problems

During the first years of the new Republic, it was not only religious problems that attracted the attention of Chinese intellectuals. The problem of culture, and precisely, the question of culture's decisive role in political life and the affairs of a state, as

⁵² Ibid. pp.53-7.

⁵³ Ibid. Confucius' *Spring and Autumn Annals* was handed down in three different versions according to the surnames of its annotators: Zuo, Gongyang and Guliang. The *Annals* annotated by Zuo Qiuming which was based on the version written in the pre-Qin "ancient script," became one of the classics of the Ancient Text School, while the *Annals* annotated by Gongyang which was based on the version written in the "new script" in the Han time, was revered by the New Text School. Kang Youwei's reform thought was drawn largely upon the tradition of the *Annals with Gongyang's annotation*.

well as the relationship between old and new, and Chinese and Western culture, began to occupy the minds of Chinese intellectuals. It mainly resulted from a general disappointment with China's political situation after the establishment of the Republic.

Yang expressed his deep disappointment with China's retrogression after the 1911 Revolution in an article written in 1913.

It is two years since our state adopted a republican system. The waves of political struggle have been tempestuous and increasingly violent, our nation is on the brink of division and disunity. Old minds and social customs have not changed at all. On the contrary, morality has suffered a disastrous decline.⁵⁴

When in 1915 he looked back over the first four years of the republic, he felt the situation to be even worse.

Recently, everything in China has been regressing. Quite a few gentry-literati are advocating a return to the Confucian private school (私塾 *sishu*) and the abolition of modern school education. Foot-binding, which had been forbidden, has seen a recent revival; the campaign for the prohibition of opium, initially very successful, has failed. The independence of the executive and judiciary survives only in name, the people's sovereign and legislature is even weaker. The [republican] consciousness and public opinion that have been established through twenty years of hard work and the efforts of the people of ideals and integrity no longer remain in the minds of the majority of the people. Citizens are indifferent, ignorant and muddleheaded as if they were anaesthetised, and it is extremely difficult to wake them up. This is one of the greatest sorrows of our nation.⁵⁵

Obviously, political revolution through the adoption of republican institutions was insufficient to regenerate the nation; something far more fundamental was required. Many Chinese intellectuals came to realise that culture was an influential and determinant factor in the progress of human society and history.

The deficiencies of Chinese culture were held by many to be the main reason for the failure of the republican movement. Giving an insight into cultural problems is actually a corollary of the historical development of Chinese political culture, which has been marked by a high integration between the socio-political order and the

⁵⁴ Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi" (Education and politics), *Hunan Jiaoyu zazhi* [Hunan Journal of education], 16 (1913). It is reprinted in Yang's *Wenji*, pp. 43-46.

spiritual-moral value system represented primarily in Confucianism. As China's traditional political order dissolved, its underlying spiritual-cultural system was inevitably challenged. In dealing with China's socio-political and spiritual-cultural crisis Chinese intellectuals provided a tremendous range of active and positive responses, inspiring an intellectual ferment which, in terms of its depth and scope, went far beyond that of the 1895-1911 period. As Guo Zhanbo has pointed out, no intellectual transformation had been so profound, fundamental and dramatic in Chinese history since the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (722-211 B.C.).⁵⁶

This vehement intellectual ferment led to a stormy nationwide intellectual and literary movement which was to transform Chinese traditional culture. The beginning of this "New Culture" movement was marked by the establishment of *Xin Qingnian* [New Youth] magazine by Chen Duxiu in the autumn of 1915, and the movement reached its height during the period of the May Fourth Movement which stemmed from the May Fourth Incident of 1919. Driven by the strong sentiments of "national salvation" and "anti-imperialism" following the shame of the Twenty-one Demands (1915) and Shandong solution (1919),⁵⁷ and inspired by a desire to re-evaluate tradition in the light of Western ideas and thoughts, the creation of a new culture which would revive the Chinese nation became one of the most important themes of the movement.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Yang Changji (under the name CZY), "Guo zhi dayou" [The greatest sorrow of our nation] in the "correspondence column" of *Tiger Magazine*, 1:8 (10 August 1915).

⁵⁶ Guo Zhanbo, *Jin wushinian Zhongguo sixiang shi* [A intellectual history of China in the last fifty years], Beijing, 1936 p. 1.

⁵⁷ At the peace conference in Paris that followed the end of World War I, the foreign powers refused Chinese government's proper requirement for the return to Chinese jurisdiction of concessions in Shandong ceded to Germany by the Qing government in 1897, while approving Japan's takeover as repayment for Japanese contributions to the Allied Forces in the war. The decision was the direct trigger for the May Fourth Incident.

⁵⁸ The relationship between the two movements and the definition of the May Fourth Movement have been subjects of academic controversy for a long time. I agree with Chow Tse-tsung that the May Fourth Movement in a broad sense is a complex of political, social, ideological and literary phenomena, none of which can be seen as less important than any others. However, for the purpose of this study, I would like to give primary emphasis to the intellectual aspect. I use both terms "New Culture" and "May Fourth Movement" in this study, because neither can cover the whole period. They took place in different times and had different contents and emphases. From the point-view of the intellectual movement, the "New Culture" expresses the characteristic of the revolutionary movement in Chinese cultural and intellectual world from 1915 onward more accurately than the epithet "May Fourth Movement." For a comprehensive study of the May Fourth Movement see Chow's *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual revolution in modern China* (1960).

The intellectual ferment during the New Culture and May Fourth periods was manifested in a series of open intellectual debates which included such issues as Confucianism as state cult, vernacular versus classical Chinese, Eastern and Western culture, science versus metaphysics (or philosophy of life), and the characteristics of Chinese society. The most significant and fundamental of all these debates in terms of its sphere of influence and depth concerned the relative merits of Eastern and Western cultures: it was to influence the direction and the course of development of Chinese politics, economics and society. Debate broke out in 1915 between two journals. the newly established *New Youth* led by Chen Duxiu, and the *Eastern Miscellany*, the first issue of which had been published in 1904 and which enjoyed national popularity, led by its editor-in-chief Du Yaquan (杜亚泉) who used the pen-name Cang Fu (仓父). The debate can be roughly divided into three phases: in the first phase from 1915 to 1919 the discussion centred around the comparison of differences between Eastern and Western culture and the advantages and defects of each one. During the second period, that is, the May Fourth movement, the questions whether Eastern and Western culture and new and traditional Chinese culture could be amalgamated were at issue. Following the publication of Liang Qichao's *Ouyou xinying lu* [Reflections on a European Journey] (1919) and Liang Shuming's *Dongxi wenhua ji qi zhexue* [Eastern and Western cultures and their philosophies] (1921) the debate over Eastern and Western culture reached its height. The natures and characteristics of the two distinct cultures again provided the main attention. Although the debate over the characteristics of Chinese society in 1927 moved to the centre of the Chinese intellectual stage, the problem of Eastern and Western culture has permeated through the entire modern Chinese intellectual history until the present day.⁵⁹

Motivated by a common concern to create a new culture based on a re-evaluation of traditional Chinese culture, two opposing streams of thought gradually shaped and occupied the Chinese intellectual stage from the mid 1910s on. In the "New Culture" period prior to 1919, the cultural-radical or anti-traditional stream led by Chen Duxiu

⁵⁹ Chen Song, "Introduction" to *Wusi qianhuo dongxi wenhua wenti lunzhan wenxuan*, [Selected literature regarding the debate of the problem of Eastern and Western cultures] ed. by Chen Song, Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1985, pp. 1-32.

and Hu Shi called for the complete modernisation of Chinese culture and literature, and the negation of the nation's entire cultural heritage. The neo-traditionalist trend, which rose from the ruins of the 1898 reformist heritage, was represented by three currents: Zhang Binglin/Liu Shipei's "national essence," Liang Qichao's "national character" and Kang Youwei/Cheng Huanzhang's campaign for the institutionalisation of Confucianism as both a state cult and a functional modern belief system. This latter group defended the core Chinese values against those who called for the total westernisation of Chinese culture. It should be noted that these three groups of neo-traditionalists shared a common tendency, that is, they exalted Buddhism, Moism and non-Confucian Chinese philosophic schools, while downgrading Confucianism and Taoism. Based on the re-affirmation of certain themes of equality, universal fraternity and the spirit of scientific element in the Buddhist and Moist traditions they attacked the despotic political culture backed up by state authorised Confucianism which had held sway in China during the period from the Reform Movement of 1898 to the New Culture Movement.⁶⁰ On the basis of their anti-Confucianism, it may not be proper to call them conservatives, but reformist. However, using some parts of tradition to oppose other parts of tradition was in fact a clear indication of their traditionalism. Their rebellion was confined to the scope of tradition.

During the May Fourth period, in spite of the unifying strength of their calls for "science and democracy", the cultural-radical camp was soon facing schism. Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao continued their stance of fervent criticism of the traditional heritage, while at the same time becoming pioneering proponents of Marxism in favour of a thorough socio-political revolution. Iconoclastic scholars such as Hu Shi, Gu Jiegang, Fu Sinian, Qian Xuantong and others who still believed the roots of China's problem to be cultural, called for the "reorganisation of the national heritage;" this was taken up by many other scholars of "national studies" and even by neo-traditionalist scholars who did not share the iconoclastic concerns of Hu and Gu. Around the same time they also devoted a great deal of attention to popular culture.

⁶⁰ Xiao Yanzhong, "Juren de dansheng: 'Mao Zedong xianxiang' de yishi qiyuan yu Zhongguo jindai zhengzhi wenhua de fazhan" [The birth of a Titan: the mental origins of the 'Mao Zedong phenomenon' and the development of modern Chinese political culture] (Beijing: 1988) p. 15-6.

Politically they were committed to Western liberal ideals and advocated a piecemeal educational approach instead of a socio-political revolutionary one.

The neo-traditionalist tendency also developed in a number of different directions during the May Fourth period. The banner of the preservation of national essence was held by the so-called *Xueheng* (学衡 *Critical Review*) group which emerged in the early 1920s. The leading figures of this group were scholars and professors at South-eastern University Nanjing, such as Liu Yizheng 柳诒征 (1889-1956) a classicist rooted in conventional Chinese education, Hu Xiansu 胡先 肃 (1894-?), Mei Guangdi 梅光迪 (1890-1945) and Wu Mi 吴宓 (1894-1978), the last two of whom had been taught at Harvard University by the eminent humanist Irving Babbitt. Unlike the National Essence group in the earlier period which had emphasised preservation, the thrust of the *Critical Review* group was development, the promotion of a better understanding of the true value of Chinese tradition and a reassessment of Chinese cultural tradition in the light of Western standards and ideas. They believed in an absolute truth which transcended cultural and national boundaries. Looking up to a high culture they self-consciously set up themselves as an intellectual counterforce opposing what they saw as the main themes of the New Culture movement centred in Beijing University, that is, popular culture and vernacular literature, the iconoclastic new history and philosophical pragmatism. The *Critical Review* group refuted Marxism, Communism and “mass democracy” and supported aristocratic values and cultural elitism. They said no to Dewey, Marx, Tolstoy, and Ibsen, and yes to Nietzsche, Babbitt, Aristotle and Dante.⁶¹

The efforts of new Confucianists in the May Fourth and post-May Fourth periods (from 1921 onward) developed from using parts of tradition to oppose Confucianism into a re-affirmation and revival of Confucian moral metaphysics and humanism through reinterpretation. Liang Shuming, who was the first and foremost important figure in this stage, based his affirmation of the value of Confucian humanism on a penetrative study of the comparison between the natures of Chinese, Indian and

⁶¹ Laurence A. Schneider, “National essence and the new intellectuals,” *The Limits of Change*, (1976) pp. 57-89. Yue Daiyun, “Shijie wenhua duihua zhong de Zhongguo xiandai baoshou zhuyi: jian lun Xueheng zazhi” (Modern Chinese conservatism in world dialogues on culture) in *Beijing daxue jinian wusi yundong qishi zhounian lunwenji* [Essays of Beijing University’s symposium

Western cultures and philosophies. He defined culture as an attitude of life, believing that different attitudes of life resulting in cultural differences. Life consisted of three aspects: material, social and spiritual.⁶² He rejected Indian culture due to its strong emphasis on other-worldliness, while his views on Western culture and philosophy were largely a critical response to Western civilisation which had been a model for China. Western culture, characterised by a dynamic, aggressive and enterprising spirit, had led to the discovery of the scientific methods which were aimed at conquering the environment in order to provide a better material life. The achievement of Western culture in the material aspect was obvious; however, Liang held, industrialism and capitalism had brought human alienation leading ultimately to the disastrous consequence of the tragedy of World War I. Therefore, neither the wholesale westernisation of Chinese culture, nor a syncretic Chinese and Western philosophy could save China. The only way out for China lay in the revival and implementation of Confucian humanistic ideals, and the adoption of Western scientific methods. Liang did not commit himself entirely to theoretical construction, because he believed that one of the essential elements of Confucian ideal of statecraft lay in practice and action. This led him to launch a “rural reconstruction” programme in the late 1920s.⁶³ The more theoretical work of the rebuilding of Confucian moral metaphysics was carried out by others such as Xiong Shili and his students Tang Junyi and Mou Zongsang, as well as Feng Youlan, a U.S.A.-trained student in philosophy.

These so-called neo-traditionalists were not extreme cultural conservatives, like Lin Shu and Gu Hongming, who denied the values of Western culture. The neo-traditionalists were well versed in Confucianism and still committed to both Confucianism and non-Confucian philosophies in the Chinese tradition, while they had also acquired a considerable comprehensive knowledge of Western culture through their reading, personal experience abroad and training in Western countries.

commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the May Fourth Movement], Beijing University Press, 1990, pp. 56-67.

⁶² Liang Shuming, *Dongxi wenhua ji qi zhexue* [Eastern and Western cultures and philosophies], p. 35 and 10.

⁶³ For a comprehensive study of Liang Shuming and his thought see Guy S. Alitto's *The last Confucian: Liang Shu-ming and the Chinese dilemma of modernity*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. For a brief account, see Alitto's "The conservative as sage: Liang Shu-ming," *The Limits of Changes* (1976), pp. 213-241.

All of their thought was willing to adapt to Western culture. Their campaign reflected an attempt to synthesise Confucianism and Western thought or, in other words, to reform Confucianism through the adoption of certain Western ideas and values.⁶⁴ It should be noted as well that all of the neo-traditionalists, irrespective of which groups they belonged to, were exponents of social and cultural reform. Neither were liberal ideas any less important in their thought, as can be seen from their penchant for competitive individualism. Furthermore, economic modernisation and the promotion of “materialist production” were at the forefront of their concerns on “national salvation.” Some of them were even pioneers of social-political reform movements, such as Liang Shuming. Although radicalism was the dominating tendency in the New Culture and the May Fourth movements, neo-traditionalism did enjoy an enduring and profound influence on the modern Chinese mind.

By examining Yang Changji’s diaries and writings after his return home, it does not take long to discover that Yang was exposed to these various strands of thought. Indeed, he had personal links with both sides. He was one of the very early proponents of Chen Duxiu’s *New Youth* magazine. He recommended *New Youth* to his students and contributed an essay and a translation of a chapter titled “Jiehun lun” (On marriage) from Westermarck’s *The Origin and development of moral ideas*.⁶⁵ However, he was also a fervent reader of *Yongyan* [庸言 Justice] and *Da Zhonghua* [The Great China], two journals published by Liang Qichao and his circle.⁶⁶ Furthermore, he formed a close intellectual association with Liang Shuming. When Cai Yuanpei was chancellor of Beijing University in 1917, Liang and Yang Changji were invited to teach philosophy there. According to Liang’s recollection, they visited each other often to exchange ideas regarding philosophical problems. It was

⁶⁴ For the radical trend around the May Fourth Movement period see Chow Tse-tung, “The anti-Confucian movement in early republican China,” *The Confucian Persuasion* (1960), pp. 288-312; and *The May Fourth Movement*, (1960) esp. part II. For the neo-traditionalist trend see Chan, Wing-tsit, *Religious trends in modern China*, (1953), Charlotte Furth, ed. *The Limits of changes: essays on conservative alternatives in republican China*, (1976) and her “Intellectual change: from the reform movement to the May Fourth Movement, 1895-1920,” *Cambridge History of China*, vol 12, pp. 322-405, esp. 350-374.

⁶⁵ Edward Westermarck (1862-?), a Finn who settled in England and was professor of sociology at the University of London from 1907 to 1930. He established his reputation through his major work *History of Human Marriage* (1891), a very well-known and popular work of the time, however, Yang did not translate it.

⁶⁶ See Yang’s diaries of 1914 and 1915, pp. 29, 171, 173, 174.

in Yang's home at Beijing that Mao Zedong met Liang for the first time.⁶⁷ Around this time Liang Shuming's views on Eastern and Western culture started to take shape; these later developed into a book *Dongxi wenhua ji qi zhixue* [Eastern and Western cultures and their philosophies] published in 1921.⁶⁸ The book not only made Liang a conservative of national reputation, but also heated the argument about Eastern and Western cultures that had concerned Chinese intellectuals since 1915 as mentioned above.

When it comes to considering Yang's view of Chinese traditional culture, Confucianism and the adoption of Western values and ideas, it is clear that he was very close to the position of the neo-traditionalists. His organic view of a nation ensured he did not commit himself fully to the radical calls for the total westernisation of Chinese culture:

A nation has a national spirit just as an individual has characteristics of his own. The culture of a nation cannot be transplanted completely from another nation. Unlike a machine which can be disassembled and moved to another place to be set up again, a nation is a [entire] organ like a man's body; if you were to disassemble it, it would die.⁶⁹

Yang's argument against the transplantation of Western culture to China was important because it revealed his principles. He was not totally opposed to learning from the West, but was concerned with the question of how it should be done. In his view this adoption should be based on an in-depth comprehension of Chinese cultural heritage and Chinese national situation (国情 *guoqing*).

A good doctor relies on an accurate diagnosis, while one who is good in governing a state relies upon his thorough understanding of the characteristics of the state. As for those returned students who want to apply what they have learnt abroad, they must consider our nation's situation. You should not adapt yourself to the situation and meet the change of cosmic currents until you have deliberated such questions as what should be continued and what should be reformed; what should be adopted and what should be discarded.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Liang Shuming, "Fang Zhang Xingyan xiansheng tanhua ji" (Record of my conversation with Mr Zhang Shizhao), *Hunan Lishi ziliao* [Journal of Hunan's historical materials], 2 (1980) 162-164.

⁶⁸ Liang Shuming, *Dongxi wenhua jiqi zhixue*, p. 2.

⁶⁹ Yang Changji, "Quanyue pian" (Exhortation to Study), *Gongyan* [The Public Opinion], 1:1 (Oct. 20, 1914), see *Wenji*, p. 202.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

As for the question of the true nature of Chinese culture, like Zhang Binglin and Hu Shi, Yang identified it with “national studies” (国学 *guoxue*) which encapsulated the “collections of Classics (经 *jing*), of history (史 *shi*), of non-Confucian philosophical schools (子 *zi*) and of literature and poets (集 *ji*).” These books, he asserted, “possessed profound and great implications, just like a precious deposit buried under the earth everywhere they could never be exhausted.” The reason why these treasures did not shine is that the means of unearthing them has not been discovered.” As for the means of bringing these cultural treasures to light, the Chinese people had to “approach our nation’s traditional studies in the light of a new era.” On the grounds of “contact and exchange between Eastern and Western civilizations the two great cultures would amalgamate and produce an unexpected result,” which would contribute a great deal to the “future of the entire world of mankind.” By looking back at the history of Chinese scholarship and ideas Yang pointed out the dynamic potential of Chinese intellectual culture through absorbing foreign ideas, and asserted firmly that “[we] acquire a world knowledge, while we inherit and carry forward the teachings handed down from our predecessors.” “If this is the case, China has profited from absorbing Western culture, China should then export her culture to benefit the world.” ⁷¹ Here we find that Yang, like most of the neo-traditionalists, was fully convinced that there was a universal truth which was beyond any cultural or geographical boundary. This universal truth existed in both Western and Chinese civilization. This universalism led to a heated argument between the radicalists who called for “complete westernization” and the neo-traditionalists who advocated the revitalisation of native culture.

As for the solution for China’s crisis, Yang’s neo-traditionalism was to assume its own modalities, briefly, that is, his intellectual-educational approach. It is one of the major tasks of the next chapter to explore the main themes of Yang’s thought through the delineation of features of Yang’s intellectual-educational alternative in the framework of a complex of radical cultural-intellectual revolution versus neo-traditionalist movement involved in a series of intellectual debates in the modern intellectual history of China.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 202-3.

Chapter 8

The Intellectual-Educational Alternative

Yang Changji's return to Hunan in 1913 happened to coincide with the so-called "second golden period of educational innovation," when Tan Yankai governed Hunan for the first time.¹ Yang graciously declined Tan's invitation to act as director of the provincial educational department. Again in 1914 he declined the offer of the position of director of the educational committee of Changsha county.² He abided scrupulously by the principle of non-participation in party and society he had set himself in order to guarantee complete devotion to the idea and practice of education.³ Furthermore he developed the idea that education should stand aloof from the politics. From the spring of 1913 to the summer of 1918, before he left for Beijing University, he mainly taught ethics, educational psychology, pedagogy and self-cultivation at the Higher Provincial Normal School and the First Provincial Normal School in Changsha.⁴ In the autumn of 1913 Mao Zedong enrolled in the preparatory class at the Fourth Provincial Normal School which merged in the following years with the First Provincial Normal School. Mao, who studied at the First Normal School until graduation in 1918, was taught self-cultivation, and the history of Western ethics by Yang Changji.⁵ Mao's "Classroom Notes (October to

¹ A. McDonald, *The Urban Origins*, p. 85.

² Yang Changji, *Riji*, entry of 27 June, 1914. p. 49

³ In his desire to retain impartiality he may have been influenced by Confucius' well-known motto, the "Superior man is not partisan," however, from his writing we find that taking education as a sacred vocation and the desire of fulfilment of role as teacher and educator are the main reasons. For Confucius' saying see Legge, *Analects*, 7.30, p. 205.

⁴ Wang Xingguo, (1981) p. 201-4. Yang also taught international commercial law and ethics at the Hunan Commercial College (湖南商业专科学校 Hunan shangye zhuanke xuexiao) for half a year in 1917. See Li Fengchi, "Yang Changji xiansheng zai Shangzhuan" [My recollections of Yang Changji during his days at Hunan Commercial College], in *Hunan wenshi ziliao xuanji*, [Selected Hunan cultural and historical materials], vol. 11, (1979), p.130-136.

⁵ According to the editor's analysis Mao's "Jiangtang lu" 讲堂录 (Classroom Notes) which included both lectures of classical Chinese and of self-cultivation were probably made by Mao during the period from October to December 1913. See *Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao, 1912.6 – 1920.11* 毛泽东早期文稿 [Mao Zedong's Draft Writings in the Early Years, June 1912 – November 1920] (Hereafter *Mao wengao*) (Hunan, 1991), p. 613 n1. In the spring of 1913 Mao enrolled in the preparatory class at the Fourth Provincial Normal School, before the school was amalgamated with the First Normal School in March 1914. See *Mao Zedong nianpu* 毛泽东年谱 [Mao Zedong's Chronology], (Hereafter *Mao nianpu*) (Beijing, 1993), vol 1, "1983-1949," p. 14. Mao's attendance at Yang's lectures on *History of Western Ethics* could be not later than the summer of 1917, because Luo Xuezheng (罗学赞) borrowed Mao's copy of Yang's lecture notes on Yoshida Seichi's (吉田静致)

December 1913)” and “Marginal notes to Friedrich Paulsen, *A system of ethics* (1917-18)” reveal clearly Yang’s influence on his nascent view of life which was to be marked by deeply held beliefs in idealism, individualism and strong will

In order to “introduce new ideas and to provide guidance for society” Yang did not confine himself merely to school education, but also saw social education as his personal mission. Journals and magazines were the main means he used to get his ideas across. On the one hand he and other teachers of the First Normal School, such as Li Jingxi 黎锦熙 (1890-1978), Fang Weixia 方维夏 and Xu Teli 徐特立 (1877-1968), founded the Hongwen bianyi suo (The broad learning translation and publishing office) in Changsha in 1914. In addition to school textbooks a journal titled *Gongyan* (公言 *Public Opinion*) was also published.⁶ As the title indicated, the intention was to transmit new ideas in order to reform people and promote social and educational reform through influencing public opinion. The first issue, published in October, carried Yang’s article “Quanxue pian” (Exhortation to study). The thrust of the article was to uphold the independence of learning which was seen as the only way to ensure national survival and provide a base for the establishment of a modern national state. In the second issue, Yang published an article calling for the reform of social customs, which Yang regarded as a pressing problem since a new polity required relevant new and healthy customs, old and bad social customs hindered the social progress and ensured that the new Republic existed in name only. In this article Yang criticised certain traditional Chinese customs in comparison with Japanese and British ones he had observed when he was abroad.⁷ Unfortunately, just

History of Western Ethics around July of that year. See Luo Xuegang’s diary, entry of 26 September 1917, cited in *Hunan Diyi Shifan xiaoshi, 1903-1949* 湖南第一师范校史 [A History of the First Normal School, Hunan, 1903-1949], (Shanghai, 1983) p. 97. Mao studied F. Paulsen’s *Lunlixue yuanli* [A system of ethics] taught by Yang during the time from the second half of 1917 to the first half of 1918 according to *Hunan shengli Diyi shifan xiao zhi* 湖南省立第一师范校志 [A chronology of the First Provincial Normal School, Hunan], see *Mao wengao*, p. 276 n1.

⁶ Hongwen bianyi suo [宏文编译所 The broad learning Translation and publishing office] was subordinated to the Hongwen tushu she (宏文图书社 The broad learning publishing house), whose predecessor was Hongwen yinshua she (The broad learning printing house) founded by Li Shiyi in 1909. In 1914 it expanded into a limited press company. Between 1914 and 1917 it published thirty-one books. See *Hunan sheng zhi* [Hunan Province Gazette], vol. 20 “Xinwen chubanzhi” [Press and Publication], Changsha, 1991, p.53. The English title of the journal was given by editors and appeared on the cover.

⁷ Yang Changji, “Yu gailang shehui zhi yijian” (My suggestions regarding the reform of society), *Gongyan* or *Public Opinions*, issue 2, (November 1914), Changsha. It is reprinted in *Wenji*, pp. 205-210.

after two issues the journal was suppressed under the order of Tang Xiangming, the military governor of Hunan.⁸

Yang also published articles and translations in Hunanese and national magazines, such as *Hunan jiaoyu zazhi* [湖南教育杂志 Hunan Journal of Education], *Jiayin* [甲寅 The Tiger Magazine] and *Xin qingnian* [新青年 New Youth]. His major concerns were education, ethics and philosophy. Some of his essays were written specifically in order to address issues raised by national intellectual debates, such as whether Confucianism should be institutionalised as a state religion, as well as the critique of Confucian social norms and the reform of the family system.

In 1913, immediately after his return home, Yang published four articles about the promotion of education in which he outlined very concrete suggestions for the reform of China's education in the light of Western educational practice and ideas. Yang felt education to be the keynote to China's economic development and the construction of a democratic system.

The characteristics of Yang's intellectual-educational alternative may be summarised in six points: (1) the disassociation of education from politics, (2) taking studies and scholarship as the basis for the establishment of a prosperous national state; (3) the development of a material civilization; (4) the reform of people's minds; (5) humanistic criticism of traditional social norms and enthusiastic support for social reform; (6) the promotion of a sound and wealthy elite middle-class.

The disassociation of education from politics

As was shown in chapter 3, education was at the centre of Kang/Liang's reform programme; however, they were kept busy with the campaign for political and institutional reform from top in 1898. Ironically, Zhang Zhidong, a moderate conservative leader during the reform of 1898, played a leading role in the campaign for a drastic reform of the traditional education system during the Xinzheng period (the first decade of the twentieth century).

China's political situation after the establishment of the republic provided Yang Changji with an even stronger argument than before for the revival of an intellectual-

⁸ Wang Xingguo, (1981), p.

educational approach. We may see Yang's advocacy of the intellectual-educational approach as a continuation of the reformist idea of educational reform which had prevailed to a certain extent during the 1898 reform movement. However, there were significant differences between Yang's reformist thought in 1898 and that after his return to China. The relationship between politics and education remained at the centre of Yang's concerns, nevertheless, the call for divorce of education from politics was one of the foremost changes in Yang's intellectual-educational approach.

Yang's discussion of his intellectual-educational approach was scattered throughout many of his writings after his return home, though it is perhaps most clearly expressed in an essay entitled "Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi" (Education and Politics) published in the first issue of *Gongyan* [*Public Opinion*] in 1913.

The first and foremost theme of Yang's discussion was to argue for an independent position for education which he believed should function as the basis of political, social and economic change and development.

It is fair to say that China has experienced many vicissitudes in recent years; our people have not profited from these new changes but have rather suffered disastrous consequences. This is because changes in politics and the laws have been implemented crudely and superficially; and what has not been changed is the spirit of the nation (民族之精神 *minzu zhi jingshen*). Political change is a change from top, while educational change is one from bottom. Change from top produces an instant effect, but its results are unstable; although change from bottom brings effects slowly, its result lasts long. The top requires the bottom as its foundation, therefore I prefer to take education as the starting point.⁹

Around the time of the Hunan reform movement, Yang identified the "bottom" solely with "education," however, the implication of the "bottom" used by Yang in 1913 had been broadened largely. It was not used in the sense of a Marxist "economic base" in opposition to a "superstructure," but referred to social, economic, cultural and educational realms all of which were proposed in opposition to the political sphere above, including government, institution and administration, as indicated clearly in the main contents of Yang's intellectual-educational reform programme. Yang believed firmly that the success of China's republican movement

⁹ Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi" (Education and Politics), *Wenji*, p. 44.

was subject to the development of social, economic, cultural and educational realms. China still needed reform, but this reform should start from the base.

The underlying philosophy of Yang's renewed call for the "reform from bottom" remained the same as in 1903. Here Yang reiterated his point that "The validity of political institutions and the law are limited by the times, while education and transformation (教化 *jiaohua*) are timeless."¹⁰ Now Yang felt it to be even more necessary than ever before to assert the supremacy of education. At that time, Confucian sages and worthies from Confucius to the Cheng brothers, Zhu Xi, Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming were viewed primarily as great educators. According to Yang, these men without exception, "were all unsuccessful in their political careers, but had great achievements in education; they were wronged politically for a short while, but their thoughts have been handed down [through education] from generation to generation." Initially, they "intended to save the world through politics," but eventually they all committed themselves to education. In addition to these Chinese examples, Yang also cited Japanese great educators, such as Fukuzawa Yokichi and Yoshida Shōin, in order to elaborate his point.¹¹

In addition to Chinese sources, Yang also drew on his knowledge of the historical development of Western society. He stated, "The divorce of politics from religion and from education signify progress in society."¹² The flourishing state of Western countries was based on their highly developed and independent education systems. "The social division of labour (社会分业 *shehui fenye*) was one of the most essential factors for social progress." The development of society and state required people with professional and specialised knowledge and skills. "According to my observation, the majority of primary school teachers in Britain have gained a good education. In general headmasters are graduates of universities. People who want to become teachers usually obtain a higher education and at the same time are trained at teacher training colleges. Universities in Britain have a history of several hundred years. They are highly developed with pure academic research, perfect organisation and independent finance. There are more than ten such universities scattered around

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 43

¹¹ Ibid. pp. 43, 44, 45.

¹² Yang Changji, "Lunyu leichao" (The classified and annotated *Analects*), *Wenji*, pp. 93-4.

the three islands of Britain. So far there is no such higher educational institution in Hunan.”¹³

National development required schools to produce people with special knowledge and skills in order to meet the needs of development in the economic, social and political spheres. Even “one who wanted to become a politician must acquire proper knowledge [of politics] and skills,” Yang claimed, otherwise, “a politician without suitable knowledge and skill would bring disaster to nation, just like a quack doctor killing his patient.”¹⁴ Therefore, modern education required professional teachers and educators “who devoted themselves solely to education and eschewed any political activities.” Yang went even further in calling for “educators and teachers to stand aloof from politics.” By not becoming involved in political activities and concentrating on education, “over a long period of time it would be possible to implement an effective transformation of society through the power of influence and persuasion.”¹⁵ Here we can see that Yang’s appeal for an independent education system had two main features. A belief, firstly, in the autonomy of education; and secondly, that a devoted professional teacher should stand aloof from politics.

The meaning of Yang’s advocacy of the independence of education from politics may be seen as part of a broad canvas of a movement towards the divorce of politics from education in late imperial China. Alexander Woodside’s research has shown that although late imperial China claimed to be a country with a high degree of unity of politics and teaching (政教合一 *zhengjiao heyi*), the phenomenon of the divorce of the political centre from educational creativity was already well advanced. This is reflected clearly in the Chinese elite’s dissatisfaction with the government’s passive policy towards the construction of state and private schools, and in their zealous attempts to change the situation. Criticism became fiercer and the desire for reform became stronger particularly when China faced a national crisis. This can be seen in the two examples of Huang Zongxi’s plan to schoolise both highest- and lowest-level

¹³ Yang Changji, “Yu guiguo hou duiyu jiaoyu zhi cuo gan,” *Hunan Journal of Education*, 2.17 (1914) and 3.3,4 (1915), see *Wenji*, pp. 52-3.

¹⁴ Yang Changji, “Lunyu leichao,” *Wenji*, p. 67.

¹⁵ Yang illuminated his point of the division of labour by citing his British educational experiences. See Yang Changji, “Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi,” *Wenji*, pp. 43,44.

government during the period of Ming/Qing transition,¹⁶ and Zhang Baixi's (1840-1907) efforts to establish a new school system in China at the end of the Qing dynasty.

However, the attempt to elevate the position of education, establish an independent central organisation for education in government and give more power to educational institutions was driven by a re-confirmation of the old ideal of fusing "government" with "teaching." After the Opium Wars (1840-2, 1856-60), the critique that China's vulnerability to the encroachment of the Western imperialism was largely due to the lack of closeness between politics and education became more and more widely accepted among Chinese gentry-literati. The purchase of degree, the civil service examination system, and the undeveloped government school system seriously impeded the supply of genuine men of talent to the government; as a result, the ancient ideal of the unity of politics and teaching was undermined and corrupted.¹⁷ The efforts of reformers which led to the abolition of the civil service examination system in 1905 and in the establishment of a modern national school system, constituted the first and crucial move towards the independence of education in modern China.

As we have discussed in chapter 3, Yang's emphasis on educational reform also drew largely on this ancient ideal of the unity of politics and teaching. After ten years study abroad, Yang didn't alter his belief in this ideal; his call for the independence of education from politics and the granting of primary importance to education in China's social, cultural, economic and political development didn't run counter to his commitment, because Yang saw it as the only way to facilitate the achievement of the ideal of government based on education. The difference between Zhang Baixi and Yang lay in the fact that Yang understood better than Zhang and other late Qing reformers certain features of modern Western universities, which included the relative autonomy of Western universities in teaching and finance, the importance of

¹⁶ The term "schoolising" is coined by A. Woodside in his essay "The Divorce between the political center and educational creativity in late imperial China," *Education and Society in late Imperial China, 1600-1900* (Berkeley, 1994), p. 459.

¹⁷ Alexander Woodside, "The Divorce between the political center and educational creativity in late imperial China" *Education and Society in late Imperial China, 1600-1900* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 458-492.

independent academic research, and the separation of Western universities from the direct process of civil service recruitment.

Yang didn't discuss openly political interference in education, however, he did criticise the traditional civil service examination system for having corrupted education, arguing that the system saw the taking of office as the end of education and encouraged a tendency to consider personal entry into public service above a concern with the well-being of the nation.¹⁸ Therefore, he objected to a direct association of education with taking office (入仕 *rushi*). He even refused to accept that taking office was a proper profession. "To be an official is not a profession for making a livelihood," Yang stated, "Only one who has certain political views and abilities and wishes to be granted the right to realise his ambition of implementing the Way and the saving the nation (行道济世 *xingdao jishi*), can enter government. Being in office should be motivated by a sense of duty, not by a desire for power."¹⁹ He cited *Mencius* to support his point. "Poverty does not constitute grounds for taking office, but there are times when a man takes office because of poverty. A man who takes office because of poverty chooses a low office in preference to a high one, an office with a small salary to one with a large salary. In such case, what would be a suitable position to choose? A watchman."²⁰

It should be noted here that Yang's advocacy of staying away from political activities by no means indicates that he opposed one of two inseparable commitments to the realisation of the Confucian ideal of humanity, that is, the commitment which could be only fulfilled through political engagement by way of public service. In Confucian terms, this was called a commitment to "practical statesmanship" (经世 *jingshi*). What Yang tried to do was to broaden the prevailing understanding of the *jingshi* ideal which saw the participation of government as the only way to bring proper order to society and state, and harmony to the entire world. Yang was well aware of the reality in which there was an element of fate which lay beyond the individual's control. The fact was that not everyone who wanted wholeheartedly to achieve the ideal of Confucian superior man could obtain an appointment in public office. As

¹⁸ Yang Changji, "Zhisheng pian" (On the principle for production of wealth), *New Youth*, 2:4,5 (Dec. 1916, Jan. 1917), p. 358.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Yang observed, the tragic motif in the life of Confucius himself offered a concrete example. To be sure, there was a tension between theory and practice. However, the lives of Confucius and many other venerable Confucian worthies provided Yang with a solution. Through dedication to education one still could achieve the ideal of humanity or self-realisation.

*Taking studies and scholarship as the basis
for the establishment of a prosperous national state*

Yang wrote “there is no other way to save the nation other than by promotion of *xue* (学).” In Chinese *xue* (学) can mean both schools and learning. Yang used *xue* (学) in both senses. School was the form of education, while learning was the content. The essential element of Yang’s intellectual-educational approach was the promotion of learning (兴学 *xingxue*). Yang’s “learning” included three categories: philosophy, arts (文学 *wenxue*, literary language and literature) and science. Of the three categories philosophy was regarded as the “pinnacle” (终极 *zhongji*). “Every branch of knowledge deals with one aspect of the phenomena of the universe, while philosophy takes the entire universe as her subject of study. Therefore, philosophy is the pinnacle of learning.” This view of “philosophy” is very close to the Heglian one.²¹ Yang went on, “The universe as a whole has a great principle (大原则 *da yuanze*) running throughout. This great principle is the source of any phenomenon in the universe.”²² “The substance of the Way is of ultimate sincerity and permanent motion, that is why myriad things originated from one principle (万殊之所以一本 *wanshu zhi suoyi yiben*). Every thing has a different physical form (or each is in its proper order), this is due to the function of the Way, that is why one principle creates myriad things (一本之所以万殊 *yiben zhi suoyi wanshu*).”²³

On one occasion when Yang introduced the concept of “concrete monism,” he drew parallels between the Song Neo-Confucian doctrine of the “great ultimate” (太极 *taiji*) and Hegel’s concept of the “absolute mind,” maintaining that all that exists is a form of one mind, namely the “absolute mind.” Yang’s argument of the great principle clearly shows the impact of the German idealists’ mind-dependent view of

²⁰ See D.C. Lau, trans. *Mencius*, 5B.5, p. 155.

²¹ “Hegelianism” *Fontana Dictionary of modern thought*, (1977) p. 279.

²² Yang Changji, “Lunyu leichao,” *Wenji*, p. 85.

the physical world and spiritual monism. However, Yang was well aware of the defect of Kant's and Hegel's spiritual monism, saying "the argument that all beings are a form of mind can be verified on the grounds of psychology and epistemology. However, we can only say that, although the application of the mind in the formation of all beings is a necessary factor, it is not the only factor. Therefore, it is tenable to argue that all beings are a form of mind, whereas it is doubtful whether the mind is the only source of all beings. ... That is why Kantian idealism was forced eventually to recognise the existence of the material world. As a result, [spiritual monism] is in fact a dualism."²⁴ This reveals why Yang embraced the Song Neo-Confucian concept of the "ultimate principle" rather than Hegelian spiritual monism in order to interpret the origin of the universe.

In order to "comprehend this great principle" (洞晓此大原则 *dongxiao ci da yuanze*) or to "have a thorough knowledge of the root truth" (贯通大原 *guantong dayuan*) one had to apply two measures: contemplation and intellectual intuition (深思默会 *shensi mohui*), and philosophical reflection (哲学思考 *zhexue sikao*). "To understand the phenomena of the universe requires scientific enquiry; to grasp the noumenon of the universe requires philosophical methods."²⁵ In Yang's thought the "philosophical methods" referred to inference including "induction" (归纳 *guina*) and "deduction" (演绎 *yanyi*). "The method of reasoning has two parts, one is induction and the other is deduction. By induction a general [principle or rules] is inferred from the particular instances (合散而之总 *he san er zhi zong*), and by deduction general [principles or rules] are used to understand particular objects or facts (由总而之散 *you zong er zhi san*). Zigong (one of Confucius' immediate disciples) is one who 'learns a great deal and remembers it,' his way of learning is close to induction. Confucius's learning is marked by 'a single thread running through the all' (一以贯之 *yi yi guan zhi*), thus what he applies is deduction."²⁶ Therefore, being close to Hegel, Yang rejected Kant's idea of the thing-in-itself as unintelligible. He held optimistically that

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Yang Changji, "Zhhexueshang gezhong lilun zhi lueshu." (1916), see *Wenji*, pp.301-4. In the section on "monism" Yang introduced eight main types of monism: material, spiritual, of two-phases-theory, abstract, concrete, epistemological, and hylozoist and of activity theory.

²⁵ Yang Changji, "Lunyu leichao," *Wenji*, p. 86.

²⁶ Ibid.

the thing-in-itself, which he identified with the “great principle,” could be known through philosophical measures.

More significant is his view that “philosophy is the initial driving force towards social progress.”²⁷ This proposition stems not only from his view that philosophy was the highest or absolute, form of human knowledge, as discussed above, but also drew on his philosophical view of the mind. He stated, “Actions of human beings are usually based on his ideal (理想 *lixiang*, this term can also be rendered as idea or mind). The ideal is the mother of reality. The change of the ideal preconditions the change of reality.”²⁸ Thought and idea were not only the basis of human beings’ actions and conducts, they also played a determining role in historical and social progress. “An individual must have his ‘-ism’ (主义 *zhuyi*) and a nation must have her *Zeitgeist* (时代精神 *shidai jingshen*). If one wants to change the present age into a more advanced one, one must transform its philosophy in advance. Although our nation has witnessed a series of extremely rapid and radical changes, the mind which is regarded as the foundation of people of our nation (国民 *guomin*) has not yet been changed yet. It is just like a sea. On the surface it surges, while in the deep it remains tranquil. Therefore, the arousal of the consciousness of the people of our nation relies without question upon a flourishing philosophy (哲学之昌明 *zhexue zhi changming*).”²⁹ Yang’s arguments display clearly the impact of Kant and Hegel’s views about the active role of the mind in the perception of objects. The mind was not in a purely passive relationship with its objects as suggested by Hume, but contributed much, though not all, to the formation of knowledge.

The term *Zeitgeist* is apparently borrowed from the German Romanticists, the first to use the term, who believed that the art, literature, philosophy and religion of an age

²⁷ Yang Changji, “Quan xue pian” (Exhortation to study), *Public Opinion* (Changsha), 1.1 (20 October 1914). Yang reiterated this point in his proposal for the establishment of Hunan University, which was submitted to the Hunan government in 1917. See his “Lun Hunan chuangshe shengli daxue zhi biyao” [On the pressing need of creation of a provincial university in Hunan]. This was first published in *Wenji*, pp. 346-355. For a more detailed bibliographical information of Yang’s proposal see the Appendix: Yang Changji’s writing, correspondence and publications with bibliographical notes.

²⁸ Yang Changji, “Lun Hunan chuangshe shengli daxue zhi biyao,” *Wenji*, p. 353.

²⁹ Yang Changji, “Quan xue pian” (Exhortation to study) (1914), *Wenji*, p. 200.

were all expressions of the same spirit of an age.³⁰ One of their essential metaphysical ideas was to interpret the universe in terms of the concepts of evolution, process, life, and consciousness. *Geist* or spirit was of fundamental importance, because in their view, “the world of nature was one manifestation of spirit; man is another and a higher such manifestation, for in man the spirit seeks to become conscious of its own work.”³¹ For Hegel, each nation and people (*Volk*) had its own mind or spirit. History as a whole had an intelligible pattern; each mind of a people was a link in a chain of progress, the culmination of which was the “world-mind” (*Weltgeist*) which was different only in very subtle respects from what he called the “absolute mind” or “absolute idea,” the highest stages concerned with art, literature, religion and philosophy.³² Yang’s *Zeitgeist* is to a certain extent very close to that of these German Romantics and absolute idealists. For instance, Yang stated, “The spirit of one nation is reflected in its literature and language.”³³ The study of literature and language should grasp spirit of a nation. He asserted, “if we overlook the spiritual cultivation, science will be never developed.”³⁴ Unlike these German romanticists who were interested in investigation and understanding of historical reality, Yang emphasised the spirit as the source of reality, and argued enthusiastically on this ground for the promotion of philosophy.

Shed in this light we can see why Yang regarded the study of traditional Chinese language and literature as a significant part of learning. He maintained that “if spiritual cultivation is ignored, the time of a developed material science will never arrive.” He cited the Western example to elaborate his argument. “The rapid development of Western civilization in modern times is based on the Renaissance. Greek and Roman cultures were the source of the modern cultures of Western countries, and the flourishing of [modern] Western learning (学术 *xueshu*) also started with the revival of the study of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy and literature.” Returning to the origin and classics (回向原典 *huixian yuandian*) is the

³⁰ Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought, (1977), p. 148. German Romanticism in the early nineteenth century had many dimensions, such as philosophical and aesthetic. For the purpose of this study, I limit the discussion to its philosophical aspects.

³¹ Dagobert D. Runes (ed.) *Dictionary of philosophy* (1972), p. 272.

³² *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, Pan Books Ltd, 1984, p. 142.

³³ Yang Changji, “Yu guiguo huo duiyu jiaoyu zhi ganxiang” (My opinion on education after returning to China), *Hunan jiaoyu zazhi* [Hunan journal of education], (1913), see *Wenji*, p. 56.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 57

point made by Yang. For Yang, reading Chinese classics and literature was essential for the enlightenment of the people and a necessary part of the driving force of historical progress. As for modern times, Yang went on, “Scholars and students of the Renaissance focused on reading Greek and Latin books, as no other subjects could be mentioned. This is very similar to the period of our country’s civil service examination in which the Chinese classics were the only subject of study. Due to the rise of Bacon (1561-1626), the intellectual trend of valuing free research became dominant in the West. The emphasis on the study of modern language has replaced that of antique languages, acquiring knowledge from reality instead of books has been highly valued; not relying on the dogma of predecessors, but on personal experiment [and inquiry] has been advocated. ... Although the study of science has been emphasised in schools, the study of ancient languages has not been overlooked.”³⁵

Yang believed that literature had the power to move people’s minds, “because literature is a place where the most profound interest of life resides. Without it, peoples’ thoughts, feelings and souls will not be touched, and their lofty aspirations and great ideals will not be promoted. The books of Shakespeare (1564-1616) were read by every household in Britain and the popularity of Goethe (1749-1832) and Schiller (1759-1805) in Germany has been a great contribution to the enlightenment of people and the modernisation of their nations.”³⁶ He asserted, “The achievement of the rise of modern Germany owed not only to its Kaiser and chancellor but also to her great philosophers such as Kant and Fichte (1762-1814). The permeation of their lofty ideal and great thoughts into the minds of German people paved the way for the German nation’s great achievements.”³⁷ Japan was a similar example in the East. Yang argued, “the civilisation of Western countries originated from Rome, while Japanese civilisation derived from China. The establishment of Japan was deeply influenced by Confucianism and Buddhism, in particular the former.” He went further, “If one wants to know the origin of the civilisation of his own nation, one must have considerable knowledge of his indigent language. Nowadays Chinese is a compulsory subject in Japanese education system, the position of Chinese in Japan’s

³⁵ Ibid, p. 54.

³⁶ Yang Changji, “Lun Hunan chuangshe shengli daxue zhi biyao,” *Wenji*, p. 354.

education system is just like that of Latin in Western schools. Furthermore, books which can be used for the cultivation of the moral character of youth are all in Chinese.” He concluded, “language and literature (文学 *wenxue*) play a fundamental role in the formation of spiritual nurturing.” Because “customs, habits, thoughts and conducts of each nation are tremendously different from each other, the taste of literature of a nation cannot be totally enjoyed by people of other nations,” Yang supported the study of national, instead of international, literature.³⁸ He criticised the tendency in Chinese schools to emphasise the study of foreign languages and despise the study of Chinese. He regarded it as the consequence of the Europeanization (欧化 *Ouhua*) of China. At the turn of 1918 when Yang was entrusted with drafting a proposal to create the first university in Hunan he suggested setting up just two departments - philosophy and literature – if funds were not available for the establishment of a large number of departments.³⁹

Philosophy and literature were thus seen by Yang as the root source of a nation and the promotion of study of philosophy and literature as the most essential means to China’s survival. As mentioned above, Yang’s concept of learning included science as well. He criticised the civil service examination system for having fettered human intellectual creativity. “Students at that time devoted too much energy and time to preparing for examination, writing poems and calligraphy, so that they had no time to pursue study directly relating to practical problems (实用之学 *shiyong zhi xue*). ... China had suffered a general deterioration of everything and was in the darkness and ignorance. As a result the nation fell into poverty and could find no way out.”⁴⁰

This was called by Yang a “disaster caused by a lack of learning” (无学之害 *wuxue zhi hai*), and became one of the major factors that compelled him to write his article “Exhortation to study” in 1914. There he asserted, “The development of modern science has brought wealth and power to European nations and America. Japan has followed the Western example and made a sudden rise. If China wishes to rank among the nations of wealth and power, she will not be successful without

³⁷ Ibid, p. 353.

³⁸ Yang Changji, “Yu guiguo huo duiyu jiaoyu zhi ganxiang,” *Wenji*, p. 56

³⁹ Yang Changji, “Lun Hunan chuangshe shengli daxue zhi biyao,” *Wenji*, p. 353.

⁴⁰ Yang Changji, “Quanxue pian”(1914), *Wenji*, p. 198.

encouragement and exaltation of the study of science (科学 *kexue*).⁴¹ “Western learning before Bacon,” Yang wrote in his diary of 18 March 1914, “had paid overwhelming attention to the study of social problems. Bacon changed this direction. Since then, students and scholars have devoted their energy and time to natural science, this has contributed a great deal to mankind (人类 *renlei*). Study which takes cultivation of moral character and disciplining behaviour (*zhisheng zhixin*) as its object is called ethics; study which is involved with knowledge of governing people (治人之学 *zhiren zhi xue*), is called politics; studies referring to matter (治物之学 *zhiwu zhi xu*) are called physics and chemistry (理化 *lihua*), biology, botany, and mineralogy (博物 *bowu*). Because Chinese learning dealt solely with the cultivation of moral character and disciplining behaviour (治身治心 *zhishen zhixin*) and governance (治人 *zhiren*) and excluded sciences dealing with the physical world, her material civilization was underdeveloped.”⁴² The attribution of China’s backwardness to a lack of scientific knowledge and technology was the corollary of Yang’s view of learning. Yang optimistically suggested that “if our people exert all their efforts on natural science just as the scholars of Han learning did in their study of Chinese Classics, a great number of innovations will result. How can we allow white men to hold sway over the entire world.”⁴³

However, science and technology, eventually, held secondary importance in Yang’s thought after philosophy and literature. Yang pondered over the relationship between “material science”(物质科学, *wuzhi kexue* Yang’s own term) and “knowledge referring to intellectual and spiritual matters”(精神之科学 *jingshen zhi kexue*) through tracing back a history of Western learning in modern China. If it could be shown that this process had developed progressively over different periods in the recent past, then adoption of Western knowledge regarding humanity, society and politics should be seen as the major theme of the present period. Yang wrote,

The introduction of Western civilization in our country was made step by step. In the beginning, it was thought that we should learn about the West’s iron warships and powerful cannons... and then [we] learned about their manufacturing, because it was said that industry could bring about wealth; finally, we paid attention to their politics and laws. But in

⁴¹ Ibid. pp. 198-9.

⁴² Yang Changji, *Dahuazhai riji* (Diaries of Dahua studio) (1903), *Wenji*, p. 26.

⁴³ Yang Changji, “Quanxue pian,”(1914), *Wenji*, p. 199.

my view we have to study their intellectual and spiritual science
(精神之科学 *jingshen zhi kexue*).⁴⁴

By “intellectual and spiritual science” Yang meant arts and the law. He criticised the government’s scholarship policy in the late Qing of encouraging overseas students to study natural science, engineering, agriculture and medicine while overlooking the significance of arts and the law. This marked a kind of respect for “material science” (物质科学 *wuzhi kexue*), but the government didn’t understand that arts and the law had greater influence than the above-mentioned subjects. The point Yang formulated is that “We should not pay attention only to “material science.”⁴⁵

To be sure, Yang had recognised that one of the root causes of China’s weakness lay in her extreme deficiency in science and technology and affirmed the fundamental role to be played by science and technology in saving the nation, however, in the final analysis, he thought that matters of spirit and thought should play a commanding role. If he had been still alive in 1923 he would probably have been a member of the camp of Zhang Junmai 张君勱 (1887-1969), Liang Qichao and Liang Shuming (梁漱溟 1893-1988) who opposed the proposition of the “omnipotence of science” held by the group of scholars that included such figures as Ding Wenjiang, Hu Shi and Wu Zhihui.

Yang linked the promotion of the study of science directly to the development of material civilization, which marked his intellectual-educational approach. Like many modern and contemporary Confucian scholars, Yang’s view of economic development had a strong moral implication, that is, social wealth was regarded as a necessary, if not the only, foundation on which an ideal and moral society should be built. Like Kang Youwei, Yang held that the objective of economic development was not only to enrich the state but also to provide an affluent life for the people.⁴⁶ Although Yang had a very different view of China’s political system from Kang, he shared with Kang the belief in saving China through the development of a material civilization. He paid considerable attention to Kang’s economic thought in his article

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 200.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ For a detailed account of Kang Youwei’s thought concerning economic reform and reconstruction, see Hsiao Kung-chuan’s *A Modern China and a New World: K’ang Yu-wei, reformer and utopian, 1858-1927*, (1975), chapter 8 and 10, pp. 301-376, 409-513.

“Quanxue pian” [Exhortation to study] written in 1914, in which Yang claimed, “Mr Kang Nanhai (namely Kang Youwei) wrote a book *Wuzhi jiuguo lun* [物质救国论 Saving China through Material construction]; my view that ‘Science is the primary means of saving China’ is roughly similar to his.”⁴⁷

Saving China through material construction, one of Kang’s most important post 1898 works, which started to take shape around the end of 1904 and the beginning of 1905 when he was travelling around America, represented Kang’s mature thought regarding the primary importance of industrialization in China. However, Kang’s emphasis on the need to develop China’s industry suffered from general ignorance of the Chinese intellectual world, which at the time believed in a more political and revolutionary approach to the nation’s problem. The best example of this approach was shown by his intimate disciple Liang Qichao, who withheld Kang’s manuscript from publication for at least two years. Huang Zunxian was another one who maintained, “If our people have no political consciousness, no sense of nation-state, no public morality, no [political] organisation, it is a case of ‘without skin where can the hairs grow?’ Without such a basis all is in vain, no matter how fine is the science.” The work was first published in single book-form in 1919.⁴⁸

The development of a material civilization

Yang had first made first known his views concerning economic development as far back as 1898 in his essay entitled “Lun Hunan zunzhi sheli shangwuju yi xian zhenxing nonggong zhi xue” [Hunan should give priority to the promotion of studies referring to industry and agriculture rather than the establishment of a Commercial Office under the imperial edict] written for the Southern Study Society.⁴⁹ At that time the circulation of Western products in Hunan, and “advanced armaments and

⁴⁷ Yang Changji, “Quanxue pian,” *Wenji*, p. 200.

⁴⁸ Xu Gaoruan (posthumous), “Wuxu hou de Kang Youwei: sixiang de yanjiu dagang” (Kang Youwei after the Reform of 1898: an outline of inquiry of Kang Youwei’s thought), *Dalu zazhi* [The continent], (Taipei) 42.7 (April 1971):199-213. In this article Xu provides a useful ten point summary of Kang’s *Saving China through development of material construction*. Huang Zunxiang’s view is revealed in his letter of 1905 to Liang Qichao. The complete letter can be found in *Liang Qichao nianpu changbian* [The chronological biography of Liang Qichao] ed. by Ding Wenjiang and Zhao Fengtian (Shanghai, 1983), pp. 349-51. Hsiao Kung-chuan provides a detailed account of Kang’s economic thought in his comprehensive study *A Modern China and a New World: K’ang Yu-wei, reformer and utopian, 1858-1927* (Seattle and London, 1975). For reference to Kang’s *Saving China through the development of material construction* see pp. 301n1, 310n29, 411, 418n35, 519-522.

ironclad warships” elsewhere in China, provided the main source for Yang’s knowledge of industrialised Western countries. By the time of his return to China, he had obtained firsthand and more accurate knowledge of Western material civilization and was aware of the significant role played by the industrial-commercial economy in Western social and political life. On one occasion he even stated “On what does the establishment of a nation depend? It is neither upon politicians, nor upon scholars, but rather upon industrialists and entrepreneurs (实业家 *shiye jia*)”⁵⁰ However, his metaphysical outlook ensured that he never regarded the development of material civilization as the sole end.

In comparison with Kang Youwei, Yang was perhaps less clear in the view that the transformation of China’s stagnant agrarian economy into an industrial-commercial one was the keynote for lifting the country out of poverty and backwardness; however, the promotion of industry and commerce were among the major themes in Yang’s writings after his return to China. The “promotion of industrial and commercial enterprises”(提倡实业 *tichang shiye*), and the “improvement of material life” (改良物质生活 *gailiang wuzhi shenghuo*) which included communication, irrigation projects and flood control, as well as the principle of the production of wealth, were the three major aspects of his entire economic programme.⁵¹

Yang’s idea of the “independence of learning” (学问独立 *xuewen duli*) which was derived from Ukita Kazutami’s (1859-?) work, gave him the inspiration to stress even further the importance of learning. Yang’s diaries from 1914 to 1919 revealed how Ukita Kazutami’s political thought and ideas of citizen education came to his attention. In his diary of 25 September 1914, Yang wrote, “Recently two scholars have emerged in Japan. One is Ukita, the other is Nitobe Inazo. It is said that Nitobe Inazo’s scholarship was vulgar, while Ukita was a genuine scholar. I have just bought his new book *Cultivation of the New Citizen*. Having read the contents I

⁴⁹ For the background and publication information of this essay, see chapter 3 of this study.

⁵⁰ Yang Changji, “Jiaoyu shang dang zhuyi zhi dian” (Some points to which we should pay attention in the educational realm), *Hunan Jiaoyu zazhi*, 2.16 (31 October 1913). See *Wenji*, p. 51.

⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 47-51. In this article Yang provided a discussion of the “promotion of industrial and commercial enterprises.” “Jingguanshi zhaji” (Reading notes of Calm Observation Studio), *Wenji*, pp. 216-7, 223-8. And “Zhisheng pian”(On the principle of the production of wealth), *New Youth*, 2.4 (December 1916): 353-360; 2.5 (January 1917): 451-458.

found that all the topics to which the book refers are exactly what I want to study.”⁵² In his article “Exhortation to study” Yang cited Ukita Kazutami in order to elaborate his point that the introduction of Western intellectual culture to China was one of the most important parts of his idea of learning. “Ukita Kazutami said that ‘independence of the learning (or scholarship 学问 *xuewen*) is a crucial element necessary for the independence of a nation. It can be said, for instance, that Britain and Germany have achieved independence of learning. They have their own literature, philosophy and sciences. Translations of the important books of other nations in the world can be found there. Therefore, the scholars of these two countries can acquire world knowledge without leaving their own countries. This is what is called independence of learning.”⁵³ On these grounds Yang proclaimed that returned students should take on the introduction of world culture and the providing of guidance to society as their own mission. And he himself devoted much time and energy to the translation of philosophical, ethical and educational works by and about the most important Western thinkers.

Reform of the people's minds and sense of junzi's mission

The fourth characteristic of Yang's intellectual-educational approach was his idea of the reform of people's minds. As mentioned above, Yang was very disappointed with the overall situation of republican China after his return in 1913. He began to consider how to settle China's problems once and for all. He considered reforming people's minds to be of prime importance. He claimed, “If we want thorough change, we must save people's ensnared minds. If our citizens have no morality, there can be no good result in spite of a sound polity.” Yang's suggestions were, on the one hand, to rely on an elite minority who stood up to fight against evil tendencies and enlightened the majority of ignorant people through moral example; on the other hand, to provide general education for the citizenship in order to allow citizens to enjoy the knowledge and virtue of political participation.⁵⁴

⁵² Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914) p. 87. Ukita Kazutami was mentioned by Yang for the first time in his diary of 11 July 1914 when he read a article regarding Ukita Kazutami's constitutionalism in *The Tiger*. See *Riji* (1914), p. 57.

⁵³ Yang Changji, “Quanxue pian,” *Wenji*, pp. 200-1. See also Yang's *Riji* (1914), entry of 3 October, p. 91.

⁵⁴ Yang Changji, “Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi,” *Wenji*, pp. 45-6.

“People have said,” Yang wrote in 1919 on the eve of the May Fourth Incident, “[China’s] politics are rotten to the core, there is no way out.’ However I say, in any situation there is a way. This way is nothing less than awakening and enlightening the consciousness of the people (唤起国民之自觉 *huanqi guomin zhi zijue*).”⁵⁵ Yang had expressed this idea for the first time in 1914, when he linked the “awakening and enlightening of people’s consciousness” with a “flourishing philosophy (哲学之昌明 *zhexue zhi changming*).”⁵⁶ As mentioned above, Yang’s call for a “flourishing philosophy” was based on his rationalist view of man. “What makes human beings different from animals is their capacity for thought. What makes sages and worthies different from the ordinary people is that the former possess noble thoughts and lofty ideals.” When it came to individuals, Yang used the term “-ism” to define their ideas; when it came to a nation, he used the term “spirit” to define its ideology. “There is purity and heterogeneousness in an ‘-ism.’ The ‘spirit’ can be either exuberant or declining.” However, it was out of question for both “-ism” and “spirit” to be present in everybody and in every nation.⁵⁷ In 1919, seeing an influx of various Western thoughts and “-isms” into China, Yang felt a pressing need to “establish a unity of national thinking” in order to “awaken and enlighten people’s consciousness.” He held that in China’s intellectual world at that time “new and old [ideas] clashed with each other” and “ideological confusion occurred.” “Many people, particularly youth, experienced difficulties in finding a proper intellectual foothold.” In light of this, Yang felt that it was a pressing task for intellectuals and scholars to work out a “unity of national thinking” centred on the most fundamental issues of social problems and human life.

Yang’s idea of the relationship between citizens and state played a decisive role in his leaning towards an intellectual-educational approach to solve China’s socio-political problems, writing, “Citizens are the main body of a state.” In his article “Education and politics” of 1913, he pointed out, “citizens who have the right of political participation must have the relevant knowledge and virtues.” Having been very disappointed with the campaigns for the election of members to the national

⁵⁵ Yang Changji, “Gao Xuesheng” (To Students), *Guomin* [Citizens] (Beijing), 1.1 (1919), see *Wenji*, p. 363-4.

⁵⁶ Yang Changji, “Quanxue pian,” (1914), *Wenji*, p. 200.

⁵⁷ Yang Changji, “Gao Xuesheng,” *Guomin* [Citizens] (Beijing), 1.1 (1919), see *Wenji*, p. 363.

parliament, Yang stated emphatically that “without an education system aimed at transforming people’s minds, there will be no sound politics.”⁵⁸ Yang believed that the world could be harmonised and ordered if the number of good men were more than the amount of evil men. He based his argument on the *Book of Changes*, which claimed, “The superior man facilitates the extending of the Way, while villains (小人 *xiaoren*) erode the Way.”⁵⁹ In 1919 Yang reiterated this point. “Most citizens today have no knowledge, no thoughts; therefore, they are unable to provide public opinion, discuss state affairs, organise political parties, or form a force capable of supervising the state bureaucracy. As a result, political power is controlled (or seized) by a small group of people, who have lined their own pockets through extortion from people’s wealth and who have ruined [the ideal] of the people’s sovereignty. Without question this minority is guilty. But how about the majority of people who live as if intoxicated and dreaming? How can they have no responsibility for that?” On these grounds Yang concluded, “where there are bad citizens, there is an evil state.”⁶⁰

As to the question of how to arouse the common people Yang thought that hope resided with “a small quantity of people of learned and moral integrity” (少数贤智之士 *shaoshu xianzhi zhi shi*). It is by no means the case that Yang thought that common people played a less important role in the historical development of human society, on the contrary, Yang recognised fully the driving power of the common people, otherwise he would not have called for their arousal. For Yang, the key issue was that the common people needed to be awakened by means of enlightenment led by “those who had first attained understanding of the duty of awakening” (先知 *xianzhi*). This deep sense of the superior man’s burden enabled Yang to see it as the personal duty of himself and others of his kind. He wrote,

Yi Yin (伊尹) says, ‘Heaven, in producing the people, has given to those who first attain understanding the duty of awakening those who are slow to understand; and to those who are the first to awaken the duty of awakening those who are slow to awaken. I am among the first of

⁵⁸ Yang Changji, “Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi,” *Wenji*, p. 46.

⁵⁹ Yang Changji, “Lunyu leichao,” *Wenji*, p. 82.

⁶⁰ Yang Changji, “Gao Xuesheng,” *Guomin* [Citizens] (Beijing), 1.1 (1919), see *Wenji*, pp. 363-4

Heaven's people to awaken. I shall awaken this people by means of this Way. If I do not awaken them, who will do so?'⁶¹

"Those who first attain understanding of the duty of awakening" in Yang's view were very few and without question were conferred with the "capacity and power to awaken the common people." Furthermore, Yang enhanced his point through linking the universality of truth with the commonality of the moral mind. Following Lu Xiangshan who upheld the unity of principle and mind, and emphasised the oneness and the sameness of the human mind, Yang asserted,

From ancient times, it has been true that a doctrine was always first initiated (or proposed) by only one or two people, and then passed through many places to be handed down to today. It retained its validity through history. Truth always wins the final victory, unless what the doctrine teaches is not truth. If it is the truth, there is no reason why nobody should response to it, because everyone shares the same mind (人同此心 *ren tong ci xin*) and the minds of everyone share this principle (心同此理 *xin tong ci li*).⁶²

Yang's passage clearly bears the imprint of the idealistic line of Confucianism that had continued from Mencius to Lu Xiangshan. Mencius argued that everyone had a moral mind/heart and that everyone could attain "humanity" (仁). The ideas of the oneness of mind and principle and the commonality of mind were taken to an extreme point by Lu Xiangshan, who maintained, "The mind is one and principle is one. Perfect truth is reduced to a unity; the essential principle is never a duality. The mind and principle can never be separated into two." "The universe is my mind, and my mind is the universe. Sages who appeared tens of thousands of generations ago shared this mind and this principle. Sages who will appear for tens of thousands of generations to come will share this mind and this principle. Sages who come from the Eastern and Western seas share this mind and this principle."⁶³ This is important not only for finding out the sources of Yang's ideas for reforming people's minds, but also for understanding why Yang believed there to be basic similarities between Chinese and Western culture.

⁶¹ Yang Changji, "Lun Hunan changshe shengli daxue zhi biyao" (1917) and "Gao xuesheng" (1919), *Wenji*, pp. 353, 364. This is a quotation from *Mencius*, 5A.7:5, and 5B.1:2. For the English translation see D.C. Lau, p. 146.

⁶² Yang Changji, "Gao xuesheng," *Wenji*, p. 364.

⁶³ Lu Xiangshan, *Xiangshan quanli* [Complete works of Lu Xiangshan], (1:3b-4a) (22:5) For English translations see Chan Wing-tsit's *A source book of Chinese philosophy*, (1973), pp. 574, 579-80. There is a slight modification in the second quotation made by the author here.

***Humanistic criticism of traditional social norms
and advocating the social reform***

Social reform, and, particularly, reform of traditional social customs and habits, were emphasised overwhelmingly by Yang Changji in his intellectual-educational reform programme. Yang's enthusiasms for social reform contrasted sharply with his attitude towards political reform. Yang believed that social progress was the decisive factor necessary for national wealth and power. "Social customs" he claimed, "are the real foundation of a nation-state."⁶⁴ Besides, Yang held that "the advancement of folk customs will greatly benefit the evolution of society."⁶⁵ Yang's writings and diaries show that the reform of social customs was one of his long-standing and central concerns. "When I obtained a rudimentary education, I saw that bad customs prevailed among the people. Since then, I have established the will to transform the common customs through the accumulation of sincerity (积诚 *jicheng*) and the setting up of a [moral] example of behaviour"(立行 *lixing*).⁶⁶ This idea which first appeared in his diary of 1891, when he was twenty-one, led to his choice of moral philosophy as the main subject of study when he was in Aberdeen.⁶⁷ After his return to China, the reform of social customs became a major theme of his writings and his lectures.⁶⁸ On the one hand he paid a great deal of attention to the exemplar Confucian scholar-officials in Chinese history; on the other hand, he enthusiastically introduced Western customs into China.

Yang's social criticism and his call for the reform of traditional social customs were concentrated in two published articles and scattered throughout his diaries. In the article "Yu gailian shehui zhi yijian" (My suggestions for the reform of social customs), published in 1914, Yang stated, "I maintain that social reform should be carried out in a gradual way. Nor should we follow [the Western civilization] blindly and europeanise [our customs]. In all fairness, the customs of our country are not far

⁶⁴ Yang Changji, "Yu guiguo hou duiyu jiaoyu zhi suogan," (1913) *Wenji*, p. 58.

⁶⁵ Yang Changji, "Jingguanshi zaiji" (1914), *Wenji*, p. 221.

⁶⁶ Yang Changji, "Yu gailiang shehui zhi yijian" (My suggestion for social reform), *Public Opinion*, 1:2 (1914), see *Wenji*, p. 205.

⁶⁷ See Yang Changji's "Dahuazhai riji"(1891-95), *Wenji*, p. 2, where Yang wrote, "A superior man should accumulate his sincerity and set up an example of behaviour in order to transform the common customs of the time through changing public opinion."

⁶⁸ The discussions of and suggestions for the reform of the social customs can be seen throughout in Yang's diaries and articles after his return to China.

inferior to the Western ones. Abolishment of our weaknesses and learning from the Western strong points are the pressing tasks of the present day.”⁶⁹ Advocating a gradualist approach for social reform was fully in accordance with his regular stance towards political reform. Similarly, he maintained a call for the adoption of Western social customs on the ground of selection and criticism just as he sought the acceptance of Western culture in general.

Calling for the reform of the Chinese clan and family system was a bold statement at that time. “Gailian jiazuo zhidu zhaji” (Reading notes on the reform of the clan and family system), published in June 1915 in *The Tiger*, appeared almost two years earlier than Chen Duxiu and Wu Yu’s series of attacks on the traditional family and clan system and its underlying ethical and social principles in *New Youth*, which inaugurated the anti-Confucian movement.⁷⁰ Yang’s article was based on his analysis of the Chinese family-clan system during the period between March and September 1914 which he had recorded in his diaries. His concern with this problem was inspired by his reflections on the national dispute over Confucianism as state religion (1912 onward) and his long interest in the comparison of Chinese and Western cultures. Yang held that the Chinese family-clan system played a decisive role in uniting people’s minds and maintaining a unitary society just as Western religions did in Western civilization. Taking this into account Yang was not at first in favour of the idea of the destruction of the family-clan system. In his diary of 18 March 1914, Yang wrote,

Chinese uphold the idea and practice of loving members of the same family and clan (亲亲 *qinqin*), and distant kin are also regarded as family members. However, the family-clan system has its disadvantages, namely that it facilitates dependence between individual members because of its severe constraints. However, [we must recognise] that it is one of the most essential factors in the organisation of a society in which people are closely related and mutually dependent for survival. In my observation, churches in Western countries have functioned as an institution of the utmost importance for governing people. Our country

⁶⁹ Yang Changji, “Yu gailian shehui zhi yijian” (My suggestions for the reform of social customs), in *Gong Yan* [Public Opinion], Changsha, Vol. 1:2, November 1914. See *Wenji*, pp. 205-210.

⁷⁰ In 1917 Wu Yu and Chen Duxiu published a number of articles criticising the Confucian social theory and ethics (*jiu lijiao*) and family-clan system in *New Youth*, for instance, Wu Yu’s “The old family and clan system is the basis of despotism,” 2.6 (Feb. 1917). For modern studies of criticism of tradition and the anti-Confucianism movement during the May Fourth movement see Chow Tse-tsung’s *The May Fourth Movement*, esp. chapter 12 (1960) and his essay “Anti-Confucianism in early republican China” in the *Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford, 1960) pp. 288-312.

has no church, holding people together and maintaining a solid society depend upon the family-clan system (家族主义 *jiazu zhuyi*). Recently someone advocated the idea of the destruction of the family-clan system. I am afraid that this would only encourage a bad general mood which would damage society. Therefore, it is a matter over which we should ponder again and again.⁷¹

However, after further intensive reflection on the practice of the family-clan system he stopped vacillating once he found that the drawbacks of the system far exceeded the advantages. He felt the pressing need to appeal for its reform, but did not completely repudiate it.⁷² More significant is the fact that Yang balanced the advantages and disadvantages of the family-clan system by using the Western values of individualism, humanism and the idea of government by law.

The main points of Yang's criticism included: firstly, from the point of view of the evolution of the human society, the family-clan system was a reflection of a primitive ancient society, while a state governed by laws indicated social progress. Yang held that in ancient times, an individual usually relied on the help of his whole family and clan when seeking social justice. China, for example, was not a country governed by laws. Her government depended largely upon autonomous local communities and family-clan meetings. The latter functioned as both administrative organisation and court. That was why in the turmoil of 1900 when the foreign allied armies of eight countries occupied Beijing and the Qing central government collapsed, the order of the local communities and people's daily lives remained as before. However, the local autonomy remained at a primitive level in terms of encouraging the practice of personal revenge and intervention in disputes. "In the standards of the laws of civilised society, this local autonomy meant rather a primitive and bad practice in the sense of anarchism and disregard of laws."⁷³

⁷¹ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), 18th March 1914, p. 26.

⁷² Yang's vacillation can be seen in his diaries during the period between July and August. Later that year, in his remark on a biographical account of a certain Wang written by Yang himself he wrote, "Having observed the customs of both Western and Eastern countries, I can see the family-clan system of our country is really particular. I view the evils of the family-clan system with deep regret and feel pressingly the necessity of changing it. No one in other countries could stand what Mr Wang suffered. The family-clan system, as a replacement for the Western church, is an essential device for holding people's minds together, hence we cannot abandon it. The important thing is to get rid of its disadvantages and preserve the advantages." See Yang's *Riji* (1914), entry of 9 October, p. 93-4.

⁷³ Yang Changji, "Gailian jiazu zhidu zhaji" (Reading notes on the reform of the family-clan system), *Tiger Magazine*, 1.6 (10 June 1915):3-4. (Hereafter, Reform of the family-clan system)

As Schwartz observed, even before Yan Fu's translation of Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* (published in 1909), the introduction of Western legal codes and discussion of the creation of a constitutional framework were well under way.⁷⁴ Like Yan Fu, Yang was aware of the spirit and the value which lay behind the Western concept of law, that is, the concepts of impersonality and universality. But Yang didn't believe that these values ran counter to the core of the fundamental Confucian ideal of government, namely, rule by the system of rites (礼治 *li zhi*) and virtues. Having compared the differences between Confucian and legalist way of governance, he maintained that what the Chinese legalists advocated and applied were "laws from times of monarchical despotism, which could not be mentioned in the same breath as the modern idea of the rule of law (法治 *fa zhi*)."⁷⁵ "Authentic Confucianism," he asserted, "is undoubtedly in accordance with the spirit of the rule of law." "The Confucian art of politics (儒术 *ru shu*) does not repudiate law and punishment; what is remarkable is that it emphasises the power of education and transformation through rites and virtues."⁷⁵ Furthermore, Yang accepted Rousseau's ideas of law based on the notion of social contract, and was convinced fully that individual freedom and liberty should be grounded in law.⁷⁶

Secondly, the family-clan system seriously violated the individual's freedom and rights. Yang showed particular concern with aspects of the individual's freedom of marriage and independence, both of which later were to become the most important themes of the May Fourth movement in the 1920s.

Thirdly, the family-clan system promoted a small-group mentality; the superiority of the family-clan's interest over that of the nation and society had resulted in the weak sense of patriotism among the Chinese people, and an over-emphasis on personal relationships. Finally, parochialism resulted from the relative isolation of the system. Clansmen who preferred to live together had less chance to get in touch with new ideas. From the point of view of evolutionary theory, the family-clan system was a huge obstacle to social progress.

⁷⁴ B. I. Schwartz, *In search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West*, (1964) p. 151.

⁷⁵ For Yang's discussion of the Confucian and legalist ways of governance see his "Lunyu leichao," *Wenji*, p. 93-4.

It is interesting to note that Yang adopted the Western concepts of forms and natures of society in order to analyse the reason for the emergence of the Chinese family-clan system. He wrote, “the family-clan system was rooted in a farming and agricultural country, while it was easily destroyed in a merchandised and industrialised society.”⁷⁷

It should be noted that Yang was one of the first Chinese to reappraise traditional Chinese customs and ethics in the light of the Western concept of “humanism.” (人道主义 *rendao zhuyi*). For instance, in his diary of 16-17 October 1914, Yang compared Han Yu’s (768-824) release of slaves in the Tang dynasty with the movement to emancipate the black slaves in America. He wrote, “When [Han] Yu started to govern Yuan prefecture (袁州), he found that the child slave trade was popular there. If parents were unable to repay a loan in due time, their children became permanent slaves. He immediately raised funds for the parents in order to free these children, and at the same time, issued an order banning the practice.”⁷⁸ He wrote further, “To free slaves is one thing that humanists of recent time have advocated strenuously. Setting black slaves free has led to war between the North and South in the American Republic. This is a sign of great progress in the modern age. Han and Liu, who were prominent ancient style poets and essayists in the Tang, ... made valuable and noteworthy contributions to humanism during their tenures of official positions.”⁷⁹

In addition to opposing the slave system, Yang also challenged on the grounds of humanism, equality, respect for person and freedom, the “barbarian practices” in the Chinese marriage and clan/family system, namely, concubinage, arranged marriage, the selling of women for marriage, and giving up one’s life for the preservation of chastity after the death of her husband.

⁷⁶ Yang Changji, “Xiyang lunlixue shi zhi zhailu” (Extracts from the translation of *A history of Western Ethics*), *People’s Bell*, 6 (1919). See *Wenji*, pp. 356-8. For further discussion of this point see the later part of this chapter.

⁷⁷ Yang Changji, “Reading notes on reform the family-clan system,” *The Tiger*, 1.6 (10 June 1915) pp. 7-8 (Hereafter, “Reform of the family system”).

⁷⁸ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), 16-7 Oct. 1914, p. 98. The other example Yang gave was Liu Zongyuan (773-819).

⁷⁹ Ibid. Li Deyu 李德裕 (?-849), another example given by Yang, who was twice prime minister during the periods of the Wenzong 文宗 and Wuzong 武宗 emperors (826-840, 840-846), banned the selling of daughters as concubines when he governed Sichuan.

Yang denounced fiercely the practice of arranged marriage and displayed particular sympathy for the miserable condition of Chinese women who were subjected to patriarchal institutions and traditional moral codes, contrasting their position with the autonomous role played by British women in the husband-wife relationship in terms of the free choice of partners and equality. He pointed out, "Marriage is a matter affecting one's entire lifetime. [Under the Chinese system] girls are usually forced into marriage without having been consulted about their personal wishes. Sometimes they are even sold for marriage. In spite of this, they have to bear it, because there is no law to protect them. One may well say that there is a total absence of justice. This is one of our country's most barbarian customs."⁸⁰ Apparently, the Western marriage system and its underlying values of individual freedom served as the source for Yang's attack on the Chinese practice.

One of the main thrusts of Yang's criticism of the Chinese marriage system was his fierce condemnation of the Chinese convention of concubinage. "Christian countries practise monogamy and prohibit the taking of concubines," Yang stated, "Although Muslim countries practise polygamy, wives live in separate rooms. They are treated equally and there is no difference between the children of the first and second wife. Chinese take concubines. This system is neither monogamy, nor polygamy." Yang held that "a concubine is a kind of slave. In society she is inferior to the wife, and thus she has suffered from not being regarded as a person. (人格不完全 *renge bu wanquan*). In a society where the practice of taking concubines remains legal, the human rights (人权 *renquan*) of a section of the people are deprived." In this light Yang argued that "monogamy is a fair system. ... It is humanistic. In a society in which everyone enjoys equality there should be no slaves."⁸¹ Furthermore, Yang argued that "concubinage has led to husbands not being constant in love with their wives and this has been the main cause of family misfortunes." In this light he asserted that "this is all because of this unhealthy institution. Therefore, this institution must be reformed."⁸²

⁸⁰ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), entry of 13 July, p. 58-9, and his article "Reform of the family system," *The Tiger*, (June 1915), p. 1

⁸¹ Yang Changji *Riji* (1914), entry of 5 August, p. 71. See also "Reform of the family system," *The Tiger*, (June 1915), p. 9.

⁸² Yang Changji *Riji*, p. 71 and "Reform of the family system," p. 9-10.

It should be noted here that the concepts of *renge* (人格) or *renge zhuyi* (人格主义) appeared frequently in many of Yang's post-1903 writings. Etymologically, the Chinese term *renge* (人格) derives from "jinkaku," the Japanese translation of the English word "personality."⁸³ However, Yang used it to mean "person" or "humanity" in the sense of Kantian ethics and individualism. For instance, in his "Gezhong lunlizhuyi zhi lueshu ji gaiping" (A brief account of various theories of Western ethics with commentaries), (1916), Yang wrote, "The true meaning of human life is of self-realisation in the sense of completing one's personal humanity (个人之人格 *geren zhi rege*) under the condition of anticipation in social life."⁸⁴ Elsewhere Yang wrote, "The next idea I want to introduce is Kant's notion of persons (人格论 *rengelun*). Kant holds that a person (人格 *renge*) has an absolute value, which is very different from that of things. ... Absolute value means persons exist as ends in themselves (自身即为目的 *zishen ji wei mudi*), and cannot be used as a means for another purpose." "This idea," Yang asserted, "is the core of Kant's ethics."

Yang held that these thoughts were further developed by Theodor Lipps (1851-1914), a Neo-Kantian philosopher. Lipps advocated "the absolute value of persons (人格之价值 *renge zhi jiazhi*), while opposing selfish egoism, hedonism (幸福主义 *xingfu zhuyi*) and utilitarianism." The notions of self-respect and respect for persons were emphasised by Yang. All forms of *Klavennature* (slavishness or slavism) must be rooted out in order to achieve complete human dignity. He stated, "Only if everyone respects himself and others as well, can true equality and freedom be achieved. Valuing humanity (人格 *renge*) rather than happiness ensures the prestige and authority of morality (道德之威严 *daode zhi weiyan*). This is a just and honourable teaching in ethics."⁸⁵

⁸³ *Hanyu wailai yu cidian* [Dictionary of foreign words in Chinese], Shanghai cishu chubanshe, (1984).

⁸⁴ Yang Changji, "Gezhong lunli zhuyi zhi shulüe ji gaiping" (A brief account on various theories of Western ethics with commentaries), *East Miscellany*, (1916). See *Wenji*, p.270.

⁸⁵ Yang Changji, "Xiyang lunlixueshi zhi zhailu" (Extracts from my translation of *A history of Western ethics*), *People's Bell* (Shanghai), 6 (1919). See *Wenji*, p. 358. As Yang himself pointed out at the beginning, the selections were based on what he considered to be of great importance for meeting China's pressing needs. Yang had translated one of Lipps' main works, *Die ethischen Grundfragen*, (The fundamental issues of ethics) which was published by Beijing University Press in 1919.

It is clear that Kant and Lipps were major Western philosophical influences on Yang's humanism on which Yang judged traditional Chinese customs and social norms. Furthermore, Yang's attack on concubinage implied that a just society should provide the social bases of equality for everyone; because China had failed, in this case, the reform of the social system was a necessary and pressing task.

More significant is that Yang also directed his criticism to the doctrine of "filial piety," (孝 *xiao*) the core of the traditional and Confucian social theory and ethics, widely known since the early Republic as *jiu lijiao* (旧礼教).⁸⁶ In China, Yang wrote, "the idea that 'there are three things which are unfilial, and to have no posterity is the greatest of them' has dominated and still dominates. This idea provides the strongest argument for the old institution [of taking a concubine]. It is understandable that everyone wants his blood to be continued. However, if one cannot reproduce, one should be content with his fate. Western people would rather have no heir than violate the idea of monogamy, because it is a matter of humanism."⁸⁷ Yang did not stop here but extended his critique to the "Three bands," the most basic principles of the traditional doctrine of *li* (礼 propriety or ritual). *Li*, as Zhou Cezong pointed out, was elaborated by Han scholars and systematised in later centuries, prescribing social roles and obligations for a hierarchical society. In comparison with Confucius' teachings of the ideals of humanity and righteousness, *li* had more behavioural force.⁸⁸ Yang arraigned filial piety (孝 *xiao*) and loyalty (忠 *zhong*), the two most essential principles of *li*, for imposing a one-sided obligation of minister, children and wife toward the sovereign, father and husband respectively, stating that this deviated from the authentic meaning of humanistic principles and had resulted historically in a brutal despotism in the relationships between subjects and sovereign, sons and fathers, and husbands and wives.⁸⁹

Yang intensified his criticism of the traditional doctrine and practice of *li* through his re-appraisal of historical records of what had been recognised as the paradigms of the

⁸⁶ Chow Tse-tsung once translated the term *jiu lijiao* as "Confucian social theory and ethics," in most cases he used Wade-Giles romanisation instead of an English translation throughout his essay "Anti-Confucianism in Early Republican China," *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford, 1960), pp. 288-312. (Hereafter, "Anti-Confucianism")

⁸⁷ Yang Changji *Riji*, p. 71 and "Reform of the family system," p. 9.

⁸⁸ Chow Tse-tsung, "Anti-Confucianism," p. 304.

⁸⁹ Yang Changji, "Lunyu laichao" (1914), *Wenji*, p. 71. See also the chapter 3 of this study.

Three Bands. He remarked, “A husband’s mother who has beaten her daughter-in-law to death was pronounced not guilty; a playful and licentious woman was sunk into a river; a son who had beaten his mother was flogged to death with a stick (a punishment in ancient China). All of these cases are typical examples in which human lives are utterly disregarded while the principles of the social norms are excessively emphasised. We must not take them as paragons.”⁹⁰

Clearly, humanism was regarded by Yang as the ultimate principle and standard. Everything should be judged under its supreme authority. Humanism also became the ground on which Yang attacked the inhumane Chinese custom of encouraging women to preserve their chastity (守節 *shoujie*) at all costs, for example to live with a wooden copy of the deceased husband or even to sacrifice her life.

“In China,” Yang stated, “there are girls who preserve their chastity after the death of their future husbands. Such a girl usually lives with the family of her deceased fiancé after a wedding ceremony with a wooden sculpture of the deceased fiancée and adopts as her own son a child of his relatives. This is decided by the family of her parents-in-law, and is called ‘living in widowhood in waiting’ (守望门寡 *shou wangmen gua*, lit. living in widowhood watching the door every day).” As to the case of a woman committing suicide in order to preserve her chastity, Yang held that it went too far, arguing that “In the West, a widow who has remarried is not considered to have lost her chastity. There are also cases of widows who prefer to remain single out of a deep and unchanging love for their deceased husbands. Although she also receives social respect, her case has not been taken as a canonical model for others.” “In Britain, a widow enjoys the rights to claim her due property, as well as the freedom of remarriage [after the death of her husband]. The clans of her parental family and her deceased husband’s family have no right to interfere with her. This shows how individual freedom is highly valued. This is really in accordance with humanistic principles.”⁹¹

Yang boldly directed the thrust of his criticism on the Neo-Confucian moral code of *zhenjie* (貞潔 preservation of chastity and virginity) Yang maintained that the practice

⁹⁰ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), entry of 2 October, p. 91.

⁹¹ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), entry of 30 July, p. 67, see also his “Reform the family-clan system,” p. 6.

of using the “preservation of chastity and virginity” to repress women emerged in the Qin dynasty and was reinforced in the Song. Cheng Yi’s well-known motto, “Starving to death is less serious than losing one’s chastity” was the main cause of this custom. “This practice became a dominant trend due to its glorification by the court’s acknowledgement of it as a model and its eulogisation by gentry-literati in their literary writings from generation to generation.” This practice which slaughtered numberless lives caused “great harm for humanism,” commented Yang.⁹² Three years later, Lu Xun joined in the group attacking traditional social norms and expressed the most forceful criticism of that time, condemning the old ethics and social norms as “cannibalism.”⁹³

Yang strongly disapproved of any kind of suicide regardless of the reason for it, including the fulfilment of the ultimate ethical principles of “loyalty” and “filial piety.” After reading a student’s composition about a Chinese woman committing suicide in order to preserve her chastity, he commented, “It may be praiseworthy for a widow who wishes not to remarry in order to preserve her chastity, but sacrificing her life for it goes too far. On this matter Chinese and Westerners have different views. The Westerners regard committing suicide as a great crime, while Chinese praise it. [Committing suicide] is indeed inhumane, and should be stopped.”⁹⁴ In commenting on another case of female suicide, Yang indignantly questioned, “Who has made our countrymen/countrywomen desire to die rather than to live? This is essentially due to the fact that our people have no idea that suicide is a kind of crime.”⁹⁵ Yang’s sympathy for Chinese women and opposition to suicide left a strong impact on the young Mao Zedong as is evident in a series of articles regarding Miss Zhao’s suicide in *Dagong bao* (L’ impartial), then Changsha’s most influential newspaper, at the end of 1919. Following Yang Changji, Mao also judged the case in terms of Kantian individualism, namely that the individual’s autonomy of will was a general ground on which the integrity and rights of a human being formed. If an

⁹² Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), entry of 11 July, p. 55

⁹³ In May 1918 Lu Xun published his first short story “The diary of a Madman” [狂人日记 Kuangren riji], *New Youth*. This is one of the most forceful and influential examples of literature of social criticism.

⁹⁴ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), entry of 30 July, p. 67.

⁹⁵ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1915), entry of 13 May, p. 159.

individual's autonomy of will could not be recognised, one's dignity as a human being (人格 *rengē*) would not be realised.⁹⁶

Yang also opposed the implementation of ascetic practices for the purpose of achieving social norms such as "filial piety" and "loyalty." The source on which his criticism drew included not only Western humanism but also certain prominent Confucian and Neo-Confucian thinkers such as Zhu Xi, Wang Fuzhi and Xu Shizuo (徐世佐) whose commentaries on inhumane practices had been recorded in Chinese history. For instance, the well-known story about general Yueyang 乐羊 who drank soup made from his son's flesh in order to show his loyalty to the Duke of Wei when he was entrusted to attack the state of Zhongshan; the story of Wang Xiang, a filial son who lay on the ice in order to melt the ice to get fish, because his ill mother wanted to have fish soup, etc.

Yang singled out these stories as examples of inhumanity. Citing Wang Fuzhi's argument against corporal punishment (肉刑 *rouxing*) and execution by dismemberment of the body, and Zhu Xi's disapproval of the practice of burying living slaves in ancient China, Yang pointed out that all these cruel and inhumane ideas and practices must be abandoned. The examples he used to illuminate his argument drew not only on Chinese history but also on Indian and Western religions. For instance, he wrote in 1914, "In India, when a wife throws herself into the fire for her dead husband, the attendants of the cremation take it for granted and none comes out to stop her. This is indeed a serious violation of humanity. Once English governed India, they issued a law to ban this custom."⁹⁷ Furthermore he extended his criticism to both Western religions and Eastern Buddhism. "Roman Catholics and

⁹⁶ Miss Zhao refused to marry an old but rich merchant whose wife was dead, the marriage had been arranged by her parents. She committed suicide in the sedan on the way to the wedding ceremony. News appeared in the *L' impartial* of 14 November 1919 (Changsha). For Yang's discussion see above. During a short period from 16 November to 28 November 1919, Mao published 10 articles regarding Miss Zhao's suicide in *L'impartial*, making the start of his vehement social criticism of traditional marriage, women's problems and social norms. He stated, "the real causes behind the event were the rottenness of marriage, the darkness of society, the lack of free will and thought, and freedom of love." See his "Commentary on the suicide of Miss Zhao" in *L'impartial* of 16 November. His discussion of the autonomous will of the individual, self-respect and respect for others in his articles, "The question of Miss Zhao's personality" and "Against suicide" etc. clearly bear the influence of Kantian and Neo-Kantian school, such as Paulsen's ethics as taught by Yang Changji. For English translations of Mao's articles see *Mao's Road to Power*, pp. 421-449.

⁹⁷ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), entry of 11 July, p. 55.

Buddhism advocate ascetic practices, which are a kind of religious superstition.”⁹⁸ “Jesus instructs people to love others as loving oneself, while Buddhism teaches the rightness of cutting off one’s own flesh to feed a starving falcon. These religions set the goal so high that no one can achieve it.”⁹⁹ He maintained that the fault was not with the people who practised these cruel customs, but with the doctrine. Therefore, he asserted that theoretical cleaning up was the foremost important and pressing task for the correction of people’s minds and social reform. Moreover, he believed as well that these inhuman and crucial practices could be swept away through laws. “Legalists said that religious tenets which run counter to the morality can be banned through laws.”¹⁰⁰

It should be noted that in his assault on the value of filial piety, traditional ethics and social institutions, and false and cruel traditional customs Yang did not name Confucianism directly. He never swung from his faith in Confucianism throughout his life, in spite of his fierce attack on conventional social norms and ethics. It should be noted as well that around the same time (1915), several articles in *New Youth* challenged traditional social norms and the teaching of proprieties (礼教 *lijiao*), although as Chow Tse-tsung pointed out, it was not until the spring of 1916, when Yuan Shikai’s monarchical movement was in its last gasp, that anti-Confucianism began to gain ground.¹⁰¹ The first article named “Kongzi pingyi” [A balanced discussion of Confucius] in the February 1916 issue of *New Youth* was written by Yi Baisha (1886-1921), a native of Hunan and Yang’s colleague at the Hunan First Provincial Normal School.¹⁰² The real champion of anti-Confucianism was Wu Yu (1871-1949) who published a series of articles attacking Confucianism both as an ethical system and its application in social norms, law, institutions and customs. The traditional family system and the fundamental ethical principle of filial piety and loyalty to the sovereign were the major targets of his criticism.¹⁰³ Shed in this light,

⁹⁸ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), entry of 4 October, p. 92.

⁹⁹ Yang Changji, “Lunyu leichao,” *Wenji*, p. 90.

¹⁰⁰ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), entry of 11 July, p. 55.

¹⁰¹ Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement*, pp. 300-1.

¹⁰² Yi Baisha, younger brother of Yi Peiji, was a teacher at the Hunan First Provincial Normal School and the Nankai School between 1916-1919. He later became an ardent nationalist with anarchist ideas and committed suicide because of his pessimistic view of the Chinese political situation. *Ibid.*, p. 301.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 303-4.

it may not be far-fetched to say that Yang was one of the pioneering critics of Chinese social norms and culture.

The promotion of a sound and wealthy middle-class

Advocacy of the development of a sound, wealthy and influential middle class (中等社会 *zhongdeng shehui*) marks Yang's intellectual-educational approach to social reform. The concept of a "middle class" originated without question in Western class theories. It is very possible that Yang Changji knew the term from Yang Yulin who was one of the first Chinese writers to use class theory to analyse China's politics and society. As a literatus-turned-revolutionary, Yang Yulin had been exposed profoundly to the trends of Japanese nationalism and socialism which derived directly from the West and were prevailing in Japan in the early years of the twentieth century. In his pamphlet *New Hunan*, published in 1903 in Japan, Yang Yulin divided Hunanese society into three strata: upper, middle, and lower.¹⁰⁴ The "upper class" (上流社会 *shangliu shehui*) meant the current ruling group which was condemned by Yang Yulin as being comprised of men who "desired nothing but to become compradors in capital letters." Apart from division based on political power Yang Yulin was well aware of the connotations of economic and professional status underlying social stratification. "In Hunan," he asserted, "there is no great landlord whose fortune is based on the annexation of farmer's lands, no magnate who has international businesses spreading all over the world, and no industrial tycoon. The majority of the members of the [Hunanese] "middle classes" are gentry-literati (士 *shi*), gentry-turned-merchants and gentry-turned-technicians. The gentry-literati group (士林 *shilin*) is the only one that can control public opinions," and generate the leaders to guide China away from disaster.¹⁰⁵ Yang Yulin's "society of common people" included all people engaged in productive labour works.¹⁰⁶

Obviously, Yang Yulin's three-level model of social structure encompassed a wide variety of social backgrounds. China had her own traditional social stratification, namely, the four-class-model: gentry-literati (士 *shi*), farmers (农 *nong*), craftsmen (工 *gong*), and merchants (商 *shang*). However, in the late 19th century China witnessed

¹⁰⁴ For Yang Yulin's life and thought, and his pamphlet *New Hunan* see the chapter 4.

¹⁰⁵ Yang Yulin, *New Hunan*, pp. 628-9.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 621.

tremendous social mobility.¹⁰⁷ Taking Hunan as an example, some celebrated Hunan gentry-literati, such as Wang Xianqian and Xiong Xiling, were actively involved in the promotion of modern economic enterprises during the self-strengthening movement. The “merchants,” with whom Chinese gentry-literati had felt ashamed to be ranked, used to occupy the lowest level in the Chinese social system, but were later elevated, and increased rapidly through absorbing a great number of gentry-literati. This social mobility and transformation of value is reflected clearly in Yulin’s definition of a “middle class.”

Like Yang Yulin, Yang Changji also accepted the Western theory of the three-layer model of the social fabric. However, Yang Changji advocated promotion of a sound and strengthful “middle class” (健全之中等社会 *jianquan zhi zhongdeng shehui*) for a different reason. “The establishment of a state,” Yang Changji claimed, “relies totally upon a sound and honest middle society. On the one hand, a sound and honest society of middle rank can check (监督 *jiandu*) the “upper class” (上流社会 *shangliu shehui*) in order to prevent excessive imperiousness and domination. On the other hand, it can provide guidance to the “society of commoners” (下流社会 *xialiu shehui*) in order to lead it away from rebellion.”¹⁰⁸

As for the role of the middle class, Yang Changji shared Yang Yulin’s views. In an article entitled “Minzu zhuyi zhi jiaoyu” (1903) Yulin held that the middle classes in Hunan “are to be entrusted by the society of commoners with their fortune and to be a substitute for upper society. It has responsibility for giving guidance and help to the society of commoners and correcting the high class. At the same time it also bears the responsibility for the destruction of the high class and the protection and fostering of the society of commoners.”¹⁰⁹ Both Yangs regarded themselves as members of the society of middle rank, whose duty was in fact to mobilise and unify the lower classes. Yulin believed, “The Chinese people’s revolution must have the society of commoners as its basis, and the middle class as its field of action. Thus the society of

¹⁰⁷ Wang Xianming “Zhongguo jindai shenshi jieceng de shehui liudong” (The social mobility of the gentry-literati group in modern China), *Lishi yanjiu* [Historical Research], 3(1993):80-95. And his “Jindai shenshi jieceng de fenhua” (Change and movement within the gentry-literati group in the modern history), *Shehui kexue zhanxian* [Cutting Edge of Social Science], 3(1987):165-174.

¹⁰⁸ Yang Changji, “Ji Yingguo jiaoyu zhi qingxing” (1913), *Wenji*, p. 40.

¹⁰⁹ Yang Yulin, “Minzu zhuyi zhi jiaoyu” (Education for nationalism), *Youxue yibian* [Translations of Chinese students abroad] 10 (1903).

commoners are the core of the revolution and the middle class its vanguard.”¹¹⁰ Therefore, Yulin supported Huaxing hui [Society for China’s Revival]’s policy of allying with the secret societies. As shown above, Yang Changji recognised the primary importance of the society of commoners in the construction of republican China. Because of his belief in an educational-intellectual approach, he held that education should be the field of action of the society of middle class.

Like Yulin, Yang Changji also used the term “high class” to refer to the ruling group. However, as for the nature of the “middle class” Yang Changji’s view drew largely upon the exemplary democratic value of the British “middle class” in the post-Victorian and Edwardian periods.

Britain has a great number of wealthy families thanks to the encouragement of industriousness and thriftiness; a great number of people of insight have resulted from a developed general and higher education; a great number of people of rightness and honesty have resulted from the general emphasis on spiritual-religious life and the valuing of personal moral character.¹¹¹

Wealth, intelligence and morality were characterised by Yang as representing the society of middle rank. This view clearly resembles the arguments of the middle class of certain British supporters of promotion of the middle class before and after the Great Reform Act of 1832, although they had a different purpose.¹¹²

Yang’s triadic vision of the social order is not simply a sociological idea, but also touches on political aspects. Yang attached ultimate importance to the realisation of the ideal of a democratic system for the middle class, because he believed a wealthy, intelligent and moral middle class to be the best solution to the problem of preventing corruption encroaching on the democratic ideal. Although China had pronounced that she had changed into a republican state, the construction of a sound democratic system, which a republic required, remained a long way off. The various scandals and corruption in the first democratic election in China, such as the

¹¹⁰ Yang Yulin, “Minzu zhuyi zhi jiaoyu,” *Youxue yibian* [Translations of Chinese students abroad] 10 (1903). For an English translation see Martin Bernal’s “The triumph of anarchism over Marxism, 1906-1907,” p. 120.

¹¹¹ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), entry of 28 September, p. 88-9.

¹¹² David Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 1998. pp. 69-105. This view is also very close to that of some of contemporary Western sociologists, such as T. B. Bottomore who holds that the division of society into classes is based on wealth, prestige and power. See T. B. Bottomore, *Classes in modern society*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1965.

purchase of votes that he heard about when he was in Britain and Germany and the dark side of the political situation that he witnessed after his return home made him an enthusiastic advocate for a sound and strong middle class.

Nowadays there are quite a lot of educated people who have knowledge of [Chinese] history and can write essays, but, sadly, have no knowledge of the world (世界之知识 *shijie zhi zhishi*). Therefore, either they believe republicanism to be inferior to despotism, or they know how to destroy the despotic order, but not how to start to build up a republic.¹¹³

Furthermore,

A citizen who has the right of political participation must have both knowledge and a sense of morals. The previous election of the members of parliament was ultimately disappointing for people with [political] knowledge. Without education aimed at the reform of people's minds and the building up of a healthy and wealthy middle class, sound political life will be never achieved.¹¹⁴

As Montesquieu found that English constitution was the "mirror of liberty", post-Victorian and Edwardian Britain provided Yang with a living example of democracy. A well-educated and wealthy middle class, which produced men of righteousness and honesty, was essential for a good political life. He believed,

This is the reason why there is no corruption in their elections. That is why historians have argued that a healthy and wealthy middle class is the pillar of a state. It is indeed true.¹¹⁵

Wealth offered a guarantee of the economic independence of a candidate for election, education provided the wisdom and intelligence for the discussion of political affairs, and a noble spiritual life ensured the necessary virtues of honesty and righteousness. A middle class was important because its members were the social conscience that produced public opinion to check evil and maintain social justice.

I have read from a book by a certain historian that the wealth and power of a state was due to its sound and strong middle society. The members of the middle rank of society were well educated and lived on their own two feet. They produced public opinion which enjoyed a nationwide influence.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Yang Changji, "Ji Yinguo jiaoyu zhi qingxing" (1913), *Wenji*, p. 40

¹¹⁴ Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi" (1914), *Wenji*, p. 46.

¹¹⁵ Yang Changji, *Riji* (1914), entry of 28 September, p. 88-9.

¹¹⁶ Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi" (1914) in *Wenji*, p. 46.

The reform of people's minds in order to transform them into qualified citizens was essential to achieve a good political life, but, it depended on the promotion of a middle class.

First Greece and then Rome were examples of the practice of people's sovereigns in ancient times. In both cases the citizen was the backbone of the state. Because China has had a long history of despotism, we must pay considerable attention to the education of our citizen. ... Without education for the reform of people's minds and promotion of a sound and strengthful society of middle rank, a healthy and good government can be never achieved.¹¹⁷

It is interesting to note that Yang's use of *shehui* (社会 society) instead of *jieji* (阶级 class) differed from the writings of Chinese Marxist in the 1920s.¹¹⁸ *Shehui* and *jieji*, both derived from Japanese translations *shakai* (社会) and *kaikyū* (階級) of English "society" and "class."¹¹⁹ The difference is significant in understanding the story of the class theory in China. We find that both Yangs talked neither of "inherent conflict of interest between the classes" as certain exponents of the class theory in the West did, nor of the inevitable class struggle, the essential feature of Marxists class theory. That might suggest the reason why they used "society" instead of "class." In 1903 when Yang Yulin used *zhongdeng shehui* (society of middle rank), Karl Marx, and his concepts of economic determinism and the idea of class struggle, were hardly known by the majority of Chinese. Chinese students in Japan, where Marx and his socialism had been introduced by Liang Qichao's journal *New People* in 1902, were the exception. At the same time, Sun Yat-sen started to promote his idea of "equal land rights" (平均地权 *pingjun diquan*) based on the need to avoid the so-called inevitable social struggles caused by irreconcilable and innate class conflict that affected the advanced Western countries. However, as a matter of fact, prior to 1906, Chinese progressive intellectuals showed considerably more interest in anarchism and Russian populism than in Marxism.¹²⁰ Yang Yulin was a typical example. He held that nationalism based on liberal individualism could be used to

¹¹⁷ Yang Chaji, "Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi" (1914) in *Wenji*, p. 46.

¹¹⁸ The standard Chinese translation for English "middle class" is 中产阶级 (*zhongchan jieji*), 产 (*chan*) means produce in verb or production in noun, and property. Therefore, the translation stresses the Marxist definition of the term rather than others.

¹¹⁹ *Hanyu wailaiyu cidian* [Dictionary of foreign words in Chinese] (Shanghai, 1984), pp. 310, 159.

¹²⁰ Martin Bernal, "The triumph of anarchism over Marxism, 1906-1907," *China in Revolution: The first phase, 1900-1913*, (1968) pp.97-142.

withstand the encroachment of foreign imperialism. Eventually, profoundly influenced by Russian populist doctrine, he called for a violent revolutionary and terrorist approach to solve China's problems.

To be sure, in 1914 Yang Changji had certain knowledge of Western socialism and Marxism, as "socialism" was included in the topics of his lecture for his Changsha students.¹²¹ However, he was impressed by the peaceful order and prosperity of post-Victorian and Edwardian Britain. There was not a single word regarding social conflict and problem of Britain throughout Yang's writings. On the contrary, Britain was regarded by Yang as ideal and exemplar. Furthermore, Yang opposed any form of radical or violent revolution. That may be another reason why Yang ignored the Marxist theory of binary polarized society.

As shown above, the idea of the middle class became prominent in Yang's social reform thought. The social hierarchy was asserted and concerned to be a necessary approach to establish a wealthy, strong and moral society on which a real democratic republic relied.

In the next chapter we will see how in the eve of the stormy anti-Confucian movement of the May Fourth period, Yang Changji, a devoted Confucian, became actively involved in the introduction of Western liberal ideas and Western ethic values, and formulated an individualism based on the combination of Western and Confucian individualistic elements.

¹²¹ Yang wrote in 1914, "As for the contents of self-cultivation for the fourth year course I should choose some topics in which students are most interested, such as socialism, non-militarism and naturalism for my lecture." Yang Chanji, *Riji*, entry of 5 June, 1914, p. 39. See also his "Jiaoyuxue jiangyi"[Lecture notes of education], *Wenji*, p.154.

Chapter 9

Two great principles:

Valuing the Self and Comprehension of the Present Reality

The last seven years of Yang Changji's life, from 1913 to 1920, although a short period in comparison with the length of time he had spent on his study abroad, represent the height of his intellectual creativity. His "world knowledge" was enunciated in his lectures, translations and writings of this period.

Creative synthesis and formulation: Lectures, translations and writings

Yang Changji's lectures on education were divided into two main parts: the historical and philosophical foundations and the practical methodology of Western education. Under the influence of Rousseau's definition of education Yang formulated an idea of education centred on man.¹ As for the aspect of the ends and aims of education Yang took an eclectic approach between Spencerian and Herbartian views on education. Yang began by criticising Johann F. Herbart (1776-1841)'s view that the primary purpose of education was the production of a good man who by his very nature strove to attain true morality; Yang felt that this was completely divorced from practical life.² Having adopted Spencer's idea that the purpose of education was preparation for complete living, Yang argued, "What is the use of a morally perfect man if he does not possess the necessary knowledge and skills to survive in society?" Therefore, "the ends of education must be determined by the needs of life within society." Yang asserted firmly, "In a society characterised by the 'struggle for survival,' ... if one wants to preserve his life, he has to struggle for survival and he has to possess the necessary ability to do so." Accordingly, "the first and foremost purpose of education must be to teach individual knowledge and skills for survival

¹ See Yang's "Lecture Notes on Education" (教育学讲义), *Wenji*, pp. 100-1.

² Herbart stated, "the one and the whole work of education may be summed up in the concept of morality," see his *The Science of Education*, p. 75, cited from Edward J. Power's *Main Currents in the History of Education*, (Hereafter *Main Currents*) (N.Y., London, 1962) p. 502. In his *The Aesthetic Presentation of the World* Herbart reiterated this point, see William Boyd & Edmund J. King's *The History of Western Education* (London, 1975, 11th edition), p. 342.

and train one's capacity to live on his own feet in society.”³ Furthermore, following Spencer, Yang emphasised physical strength as a necessary ability for an individual living in society. Yang also shared Spencer's belief in scientific knowledge and especially the knowledge that helped individuals to solve life's problems as having the greatest value.⁴ It should be noted that Yang's rejection of Herbart's idea by no means signified a denial of the value of the moral aspect of education. What Yang refuted was the assigning of the production of a moral man as the only and primary aim of education.⁵

Yang's view of the second principal goal of education was profoundly influenced by Herbart's notion of “aesthetic taste.” Yang stated, “since another distinct characteristic of modern civilisation is materialism, people of the modern world find it hard to avoid becoming materialist. That is why the fittest who have survived the struggle for life indulge themselves in carnal pleasures, corrupt social morals and destroy the social foundation of family life. Therefore, a lofty ideal (高尚之主义 *gaoshang zhi zhuyi*) is indeed necessary, if we want to protect these successful survivors from [moral] degeneration, to stabilize family and to maintain social morality.”⁶ There were various solutions, however, Yang believed, “fostering people's noble “aesthetic tastes” (美观 *meiguan*) and developing them so that they could influence entire society is indeed a effective way.”⁷ While Yang criticised Herbart's five fundamental ideas for being only a form without contents, he embraced Herbart's idea of the development of “main-sided interests.”⁸ Thus, “aesthetic education” (美育 *meiyu*) became Yang's second goal of education.

In order to avoid the weakness of Spencer's view of education which gave priority to individual development over the collective goal, Yang assigned the formation of an individual's social character, in terms of a sense of being concerned about and

³ For Spencer's view of the goal of education see W. Boyd & E. J. King's *The History of Western Education*, pp.371-3, and E. J. Power' *Main Currents*, p. 422. For Yang's view see his “Lecture Notes on Education”, *Wenji*, pp. 114-5.

⁴ For Spencer's view see E. J. Power' *Main Currents*, pp. 529-30. For Yang's arguments see his “Lecture Notes on Education”, *Wenji*, pp. 115-6.

⁵ Yang Changji, “Lecture Notes on Education”, *Wenji*, p, 116.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 118.

⁷ *Ibid.*

devoted to social progress but not at the cost of an individual's personal development, as the third purpose of education.⁹ One of Yang's central concerns was how to reconcile the individual's interests with the interests of society. This was evident in Yang's approach to educational thought from ancient Greece to modern times which he divided into three categories: individual development, national and social progress, and the individual and society. However, at the same time, he stated that the difference between these was only a matter of degree, rather than of nature. Accordingly, the strength of the state was the main concern in ancient Greek and Roman education; during the Renaissance and the eighteenth-century enlightenment movement when human values dominated educational thoughts, concerns were individual-centred; in the nineteenth century, Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) tried to strike a balance between the individual and society and his educational thought expressed a dual concern, while nationalism and patriotism marked Johann G. Fichte's (1762-1814) educational philosophy. Friedrich E. D. Schleiermacher (1768-1834) maintained that education should be directed towards drawing out an individual's moral character (个人之人格 *geren zhi rengen*), while at the same time developing his capacities to integrate into social and ethical life. He emphasised both individual and social education in his educational thought. Herbart overwhelmingly emphasised the individual's development and this line of thought was further developed by his disciple Tuiskon Ziller (1817-1882). To judge whether Yang's interpretation of Western educational thoughts and its development is close to the facts or not, lies beyond the purpose of this study: what is important is that Yang's perception of Western education indicated his overriding anthropocentric concern, and became one of the most substantial components of his philosophy of "valuing the self" and "comprehension of the present."

We don't know the sources of Yang's lectures on educational psychology; however according to his diaries, we do know that while writing his lectures, he was reading intensively Alexander Bain's works on psychology, Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Psychology*, and also Fukurai Tomokichi's (福来友吉) *Lectures on psychology*,

⁹ For Yang's criticism of Herbart's five ideas see *Wenji*, pp.111-4. For Herbart's notions of "aesthetic taste" and the cultivation of "main-sided interests" see W. Boyd & E. J. King's *The History of Western Education*, pp. 344-6.

Elements of psychology and *Essence of psychology* and Takashima Heizaburo's (高島平三郎) *Applied Psychology*. Furthermore, he also translated Spencer's "On feeling" and some parts of Fukurai Tomokichi's works.¹⁰

The sources of Yang's lecture of self-cultivation included mainly his "Dahuazhai riji" (1903) [Diary of Dahua studio], *Lunyu leichao* (Classified *Analects* with annotation and commentaries), Zhang Zai's *Zhengmeng* [Correcting youthful Ignorance], Yuan Cai's (袁采 1140-1195) *Yuanshi shifan* 袁氏世范 [Mr Yuan's Precepts for Social Life]; Lü Kun's (吕坤 1536-1618) *Shenyin yu* 呻吟语 [Groaning Words], and *Rixing lu* 日省录 [Record of daily self-examination]; Wang Fuzhi's works on history and Zeng Guofan's diaries of self-cultivation and *Shengzhe huaxiang ji* [Portraits of sages and philosophers].¹¹ Except for Yang's own writings, most of the other works were studied by Yang in his youth.¹²

Yang's *Lunyu leichao* consisted of five chapters: "lizhi" (立志 Establishment of the will), "zongjiao sixiang" (宗教思想 Religious thoughts), "xingdao weiyang" (性道微言 The hidden but most significant implications of human nature and the Way), "rujia taidu" (儒家态度 Confucian attitude) and "chushi geyan" (处世格言 Maxims about conduct in society). From the order of the chapters Yang's emphasis can be seen

⁹ For Spencer's view see E. J. Power, *Main Currents*, p. 528. For Yang's assumptions see his "Lecture Notes on Education", *Wenji*, pp. 120-6.

¹⁰ A. Bain's *Education as Science* was on the required reading list for education when Yang studied at Aberdeen. See chapter 5 of this study. Educational psychology was a sub-topic of the education course, see *A history of the First Normal School*, p.16, 21-2. For Yang's teaching of psychology see his diary of 26 March 1915, where he wrote, "Yesterday I read Spencer's [chapter of] 'on feeling.' ... Currently I am teaching psychology and should read more books of this kind." *Riji*, p.164. In his diary of 2 June 1914 Yang listed the titles of eight recently published Japanese books concerning psychology that he wished to buy. Among these Japanese authors only Fukurai Tomokichi and Takashima Heizaburo's books appeared in Yang's later diaries. See *Riji*, pp. 162, 163 and 178. However, for Yang, Spencer was more attractive than Takashima Heizaburo. In the diary of 24 March 1915 Yang wrote, "I enjoyed reading Spencer more than Takashima Heizaburo's *Applied Psychology*." *Riji*, p. 163. For Yang's translation of Spencer see *Riji* (1915), entries of 5, 9 16 April pp. 169, 171 and 173; and of Fukurai Tomokichi (福米友吉), see *Riji*, pp. 178-9.

¹¹ The author of the *Record of daily self-examination* is unknown. In his diaries of 21 and 22 November 1914, Yang drafted examination questions for the course of self-cultivation which were divided into 9 sections: 1) Lü Kun's *Groaning Words* included 10 questions; 2) "Dahuazhai riji" (1903), 33 questions; 3) "Lunyu leichao" 26 questions; 4) "Characteristics of sages, worthies and heroes," 39 questions; 5) "Hygiene," 28 questions; 6) "A regular life," 17 questions; 7) "Guard against arrogance," 11 questions; 8) Mr Yuan's precepts for social life, 44 questions; and 9) *Record of daily self-examination*, 26 questions. See *Riji*, pp. 119-124. Furthermore, Yang's teaching arrangements of "self-cultivation" can also be seen in his diaries of 26 August 1914 and 12 January 1915, *Riji*, pp. 75, 148. See also Mao Zedong's "Jiangtang lu" (Classroom Notes) in *Mao wengao*, pp. 581-2.

¹² See chapter 2 of this study. In his diary of 1894 Yang recorded his reading of Yuan Cai's *Precepts for Social Life*. See *Wenji*, p. 8.

clearly. Primary importance was given for an individual to establish will not only in terms of having lofty aspirations, but also referring to the autonomous spirit and moral strength and courage which Yang regarded as the basis of an individual's self-realisation. The knowledge and experience of Western education made Yang fully aware of the importance of religious education in the cultivation of personal character and virtues. Additionally, Yang felt a pressing need to give his students a clear understanding of the characteristics of the religious strains in the Confucian tradition, the Confucian attitude towards God and spiritual beings, which were totally different from the West, and the vital role of religion in helping the individual to lead a healthy spiritual life. The fundamental ideas of Confucian metaphysics and cosmology were dealt with in the chapter called "The hidden but most significant implications of human nature and Way." Within a framework of the Confucian tradition, Western philosophy, current trends of ethical thoughts and social Darwinism were all introduced. Together with "Dahuazhai riji" (1903) these two works were representative of Yang Changji's adaptation of Western thought to Confucian ethics.

Family rituals and precepts were one of the most significant aspects of Confucian education. Yuan Cai's work was an example of the efforts of Song scholars to formulate family rituals and precepts and reflected an important shift of intellectual focus among Song scholars from a literary-historical perspective to an ethical-philosophical perspective.¹³ Furthermore, one of the central themes in Yuan's work was that the true worth of an individual should be valued in terms of ethical conduct regardless of social and financial status.¹⁴ Yuan divided his *Precepts for Social life* into three parts: good-family/clan relations (睦亲 *muqin*), disciplining personal conduct (处己 *chuji*) and managing the family (治家 *zhijia*). Forty-four questions for examination drafted by Yang covered all aspects of Yuan's work.¹⁵ It is very likely

¹³ Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "Education through ritual: Efforts to formulate family rituals during the Sung period." *Neo-Confucian Education: The formative stage*, ed. by John Chaffee and Wm. Theodore de Bary, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, pp. 277-306. Peter K Bol, "This Culture of ours": *Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*, California: Stanford University Press 1992, pp.11-4.

¹⁴ Peter K Bol, "This Culture of ours." p. 13.

¹⁵ Yang Changji, *Riji*, entry of 22 November 1914, pp. 123-4. Yuan Cai's *Precepts for social life* passed through many editions. One of the popular editions was published by Zhibuzu zhai congshu

that Yuan's realistic approach to daily life attracted Yang's attention; for Yang, the social and ethical values of Song times (960-1279), which underlay these precepts, remained valid and useful in the twentieth century.

The influence of Ming thought on Yang can be clearly seen in his use of Lü Kun's *Groaning Words*. Like Lü's other earlier work *Xingxin ji* 省心集 [A Record of Self-cultivation], *Groaning Words* was a collection of Lü's daily reflections on philosophical and ethical problems. Perhaps no other work of his time explored an individual's inner thoughts so frankly. Lü believed that with a personal experiential understanding (体认 *tiren*), "one need not read all the ancient and contemporary books." This, together with an informal colloquial style of expression, characterised Lü's *Groaning Words*.¹⁶ In addition to Lü Kun, Yang also introduced Chen Xianzhang (1428-1500) and his thought to his students quoting from *Mingru xue'an* [Case studies of Ming Confucianists].¹⁷

Wang Fuzhi and Zeng Guofan, both Hunanese figures of the Qing dynasty, remained important figures in Yang's course. Furthermore, Yang also selected the "moral aphorisms and noble deeds" (嘉言懿行 *jiayan yixing*) of men of integrity from biographies in the *Histories of twenty-four Dynasties* as concrete examples for his students.¹⁸ Although occasionally there were stories or anecdotes of Japanese or Western figures, generally speaking, Yang's lectures on self-cultivation dealt with the Chinese tradition.

In the early years of the republic Chinese ethics, one of the strengths of the Chinese philosophical tradition, was mainly taught in the form of self-cultivation. However, Western ethics were new to the Chinese curriculum. Yang Changji was among the first group of Chinese intellectuals to be trained in ethics abroad, and who then went on to teach Western ethics in China.¹⁹ In the academic year of 1916-17 Yang

[Collections of Studio of knowing the weakness] in the Qing dynasty. It can also be found in *Siku quanshu* [Four Libraries], *zi'ji* [(category of) philosophy], *rujia* 儒家 ((section of) Confucian school).

¹⁶ Handlin, Joanna F., *Action in Late Ming Thought: the Reorientation of Lü K'un and other Scholar-Officials*, (Berkeley, 1983) pp. 187-193.

¹⁷ Mao Zedong, "Classroom Notes," *Mao wengao*, p. 581.

¹⁸ Yang Changji, *Riji*, entry of 11 Sept. 1914, p. 79.

¹⁹ Cai Yuanpei was one of the first Chinese to introduce Western ethics into China. His translation of Paulsen's *Principles of Ethics*, which Yang used to teach Mao, was probably the first work of this kind. Hu Shi studied in America from 1910 to 1917. He took agriculture first and then transferred to study philosophy under John Dewey. His main interest was history of Chinese philosophy in general.

Changji introduced Western ethics into the curriculum of the First Normal School, Hunan for the first time. He had translated parts of his Japanese teacher Yoshida Seichi (吉田静致)'s "Lectures Notes on the *History of Western Ethics*" as teaching material for the course.²⁰ It is certain that he taught Paulson's *Principles of Ethics* in the academic year of 1917-8 as a part of a self-cultivation course.²¹ It was not until 1918, when Yang was appointed by Cai Yuanpei as the first professor in ethics at Beijing University, that Western ethics was taught as an independent subject in China.²² The textbook, Yang's translation of Yoshida Seichi's "Lectures Notes" under the Chinese title *Xiyang lunlixue shi* 西洋伦理学史 [A History of Western Ethics] sold out quickly.²³ In 1920 the second edition was published with a "Preface" by Hu Shi, in which Hu remarked, "Even in America and Europe, good treatises dealing specifically with the history of ethics are really rare. There are a couple of pieces in English, but they are neither detailed nor comprehensive. The present book provides a very detailed account of the development of modern ethics; although it is really a pity that it ends at Spencer, it remains a valuable book of reference."²⁴

In 1919 Yang published another translation as textbook for his students, namely, Theodor Lipps' (1851-1914) *Die ethischen Grundfragen* with Chinese title *Lunlixue zhi genben wenti* 伦理学之根本问题 (The fundamental issues in ethics). It is interesting to note that Yang did not chose what he had read at Aberdeen, such as Spencer's *Principles of Ethics*, Sidgwick's very popular *Outline of History of Ethics* or Wundt's *Ethics: an Investigation of the facts and laws of moral life*, the last two of which he re-read in 1915.²⁵ In 1915 Yang had also read intensively John Dewey and Tufts' *Ethics*, an influential and widely circulated work of that time.²⁶ The reason for choosing Lipps was that Yang shared Lipps' belief that certain questions were

²⁰ See footnote 58 of chapter 5 of this study.

²¹ See Mao Zedong's "Marginal Notes," *Mao wengao*, p. 276n1.

²² See Xiao Chaoran, *et al*, *Beijingdaxue xiaoshi, 1898-1949* 北京大学校史 [History of Beijing University, 1898-1949], Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1988, pp. 58-9.

²³ The first volume of *A History of Western Ethics* was published in November 1918 and the volume two in 1919. See Wang Xingguo, (1981), p. 204.

²⁴ Hu Shi, "Ba" (Preface) to *Xiyang lunlixue shi* [A History of Western ethics], Beijing University Press, 1920.

²⁵ Yang Changji, *Riji*, entries of 27 April and 11, 15 July 1915, pp. 175, 182, 183.

fundamental, including how an individual could realise his supreme and intrinsic value as a human being; if we were really a free agent and whether freedom of action was necessary for moral responsibility; whether an individual's self-realisation necessarily ran counter to collective goals of society. Furthermore, Yang was also in agreement with Lipps' ethical theory which "refuted utilitarian notions of ethical egoism and hedonism while advocating the idea of the supreme worth of individual's personality (人格 *rengē*) from a Kantian standpoint that man existed as an end in himself."²⁷

Beside teaching and translation Yang also became involved in the formation of a "Beijing University Philosophical Society" (北京大学哲学研究会 Beijing Daxue zhexue yanjiuhui), which was established on 25 January 1919.²⁸ Mao Zedong was actively involved in the activities of the Philosophical Society.²⁹ Therefore, it may not be too far-fetched to say that Yang's efforts marked the beginning of Western ethics obtaining a foothold in the Chinese classroom and academic world.

Yang regarded the introduction of Western philosophy as his own mission, not only for his school students, but also for society. "The introduction of Western civilization [into China]," Yang wrote in his diary of 1915, "is the responsibility of those who know Western languages. Publishing one more book means adding to society intellectual treasure."³⁰ Before Yang moved to Beijing University he had published two substantial works: "Gezhong lunli zhuyi zhi shulüe ji gaiping" 各种伦理主义之述略及概评 (A critical account of Western ethical theories), in *Eastern Miscellany*, 东方杂志 and "Zhexue shang gezhong lilun zhi lueshu" 哲学上各种理论之略述 (An exposition of the pivotal ideas of Western Philosophy), in

²⁶ According to his diary of 1915, Yang read J. Dewey and Tuft's *Ethics* from May to July. See *Riji*, pp. 179-83. For comments on Dewey and Tufts' *Ethics*, see H. Sidgwick's *Outlines of the History of Ethics for English Reader*, 1960, enlarged version by Alban G. Widgey, p. 388.

²⁷ Yang Changji, "Xiyang lunlixueshi zhi zhailu" (Extracts from my translations of *A history of Western ethics*). It was first published in *Minduo* 民铎 [People's Bell], no. 6, 1919, and reprinted in *Wenji*, pp. 356-362 (hereafter Extracts), see *Wenji*, p. 358.

²⁸ Yang Changji was a co-founder, see "Beijingdaxue zhexue yanjiuhui jianzhang" (Regulations of the Philosophical Society of Beijing University) in *Beijingdaxue rikan* [Beijing University Daily], 28 January 1919, cited in Xiao Chaoran, *History of Beijing University*, p. 45.

²⁹ Mao Zedong arrived on 19 August 1918 in Beijing for preparation for "Hunanese students's work-study programme" and left Beijing for Changsha on 12 March 1919 because his mother was seriously ill. See *Mao Zedong nianpu*, 1893-1949, vol. 1, pp. 37-40.

³⁰ Yang Changji, *Riji*, entry of 5 April 1915, p. 169.

Min Sheng 民声 [People's voice] (Changsha).³¹ As to the motivation of introducing Western ethics, Yang declared that, in order to meet the increasing interest of young Chinese students in Western ethics, he had published the "Western ethical theories" which was based on a study of Japanese Fukai Yasufumi (深井安文) with his own added commentaries and criticism.³² The first five sections of Yang's account focused on the theories of various ascetic and hedonist schools from ancient Greece to modern times. In the final section entitled "ziwoshixianzhuyi" 自我实现主义 (Self-realisation). T. H. Green's (1836-1882) doctrine of self-realisation was the main subject.³³ This account is significant, for it was one of Yang's foremost important ethical writings. It showed explicitly his perception and understanding of one of the most substantial strains of Western ethics; and also outlined clearly questions such as what constituted a good life, how to realise a person's individual and social potential, and the nature and meaning of human existence and life.

We don't know the source of Yang's "The pivotal ideas of Western philosophy," since there are no footnotes, or bibliography. It probably reflects Yang's own ideas. This philosophical writing, containing about 36,500 words, is centred on the "First Principles" (第一原理 *diyī yuánlǐ*).³⁴ More than forty essential ideas were selected and

³¹ "A critical account of Western ethical theories" (Hereafter "Western ethical theories") appeared first in *Eastern Miscellany*, 东方杂志 13.2,3,4 (1916) and in 1923 its book-form was published under a new title *Xiyang lunlizhuyi shuping* [西洋伦理主义述评] as one of a series collections of Eastern Library [东方文库] by the Commercial Press. "An exposition of significant ideas of Western Philosophy" (Hereafter "Ideas of Western Philosophy") was first published in *Min Sheng* 民声 [People's voice] (Changsha), 1. 1,2,3 (1916) and reprinted in *Min Duo* 民铎 [People's Bell] (Shanghai), 2.2,3,4, 5 (1921) by Li Shicen (1892-1934), editor-in-chief of People's Bell and *Xuedeng*, [Lamp of Learning], a supplement to *Shishi xinbao* in 1920s. Both writings now can be found in Yang's *Wenji*.

³² See the first paragraph of the "Western ethical theories," *Wenji*, p. 247.

³³ The "Western ethical theories" consisted of six parts: 1) jinyuzhuyi 禁欲主义 (Asceticism), 2) kuailezhuyi 快乐主义 (Hedonism), 3) geren de kuailezhuyi 个人的快乐主义 (Individualistic Hedonism), 4) gongzhongde kuailezhuyi 公众的快乐主义 (utilitarian notion of hedonism), 5) jinhualun de kuailezhuyi 进化论的快乐主义 (evolutionary notion of hedonism), and 6) ziwoshixianzhuyi 自我实现主义 (Self-realisation). See *Wenji*, pp. 247-273.

³⁴ The "Pivotal ideas of Western philosophy" is much longer than "Western ethical theories" which has about 14, 100 words. The total is based on an estimate that there are approximately 25 words per line. The term "First Principles" was widely used by many philosophers. In Aristotle, who believed that each science must depend on a set of first principles, it denotes axioms that are necessarily true and directly knowable. Hobbes used the term to entitle his philosophical treatise in which he laid out his ideas of principle of motion, while Spencer did the same thing, but denoted philosophy as a synthesis of the fundamental principles of the special sciences. It is also a phrase used by F. Herbert Bradley (1846-1924) in his preliminary discussion of metaphysics as "the study of first principles," or ultimate, irrefutable truths. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, DVD 2000 (1994-2000). Yang's usage is close to Bradley's analysis of metaphysics and ontology. In his "Western ethical theories" Yang wrote, "There are many ways of classification in philosophy, for instance, based on the

some eighty-five philosophers from ancient Greece to the nineteenth century were discussed. Stressing ideas and their development, instead of philosophers, the writing was divided into three main aspects: epistemology, realism and idealism, and ontology. Rationalism and its rival school “Empiricism” were the main subjects of the “epistemology” section. Yang provided a quite long account to trace their origins in Greek thought, their emergence in England, their influence in France and development in the thought of German positive empiricists, such as Ernst Lask (1875-1915) and psychologist and philosopher Wilhem Max Wundt (1832-1920) and his school. In the second category “realism and idealism,” (实在论及观念论 *shizailun ji guannianlun*) and their various forms and schools in metaphysics, logic and epistemology were introduced. Centred on the two fundamental questions of the source of knowledge and whether we could know the “thing-in-itself” Yang explored British thought focusing on John Locke and Berkeley and the German line from Kant through Fichte (1762-1814), Schelling (1775-1854), Hegel and Schopenhauer (1788-1860) to Eduard von Hartmann (1842-1906). The “ontology” section which was the most comprehensive part of Yang’s treatise, can be divided into four sub-groups: monism, dualism and pluralism; theism, atheism, pantheism and voluntarism; panlogism, mechanism and teleology; and the philosophy of identity.

Apart from the above mentioned works, Yang also published his translation of one chapter of Edward Westermarck’s *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* under the Chinese title “Jiehun lun”结婚论 (On marriage) in 1918 in *New Youth*, a journal which had become the leading forum challenging traditional social codes and norms. Westermarck’s discussion of the ethical concept of “marriage” was based on anthropological studies of different civilizations. The main topics Yang chose included the origins of inbreeding marriage and why it had been forbidden in modern society; how monogamy represented progress; and the view that the ideal relationship between wife and husband should be based on equality, freedom and mutual love.³⁵ Although the translation was published in 1918, it has been completed

property of the “First Principles,” there are materialism and idealism; based on the form of the “First Principles” there are monism, dualism and pluralism, etc.” See *Wenji*, p, 295.

³⁵ See Yang Changji (tran.) “Jiehun lun”结婚论 (On marriage), *New Youth*, 5.3 (1918):189-205.

in 1915.³⁶ Marriage was a long-standing concern of Yang. While studying at Aberdeen, the British marriage customs and system, particularly Woman's rights and woman's role in marriage and the family were among Yang's central concerns. These observations and reflections formed one of the most essential parts of Yang's social reformist thought, and became the central themes of his article "Gailiang jiazu zhidu zhaji" 改良家族制度札记 (Reading notes on reform of the clan and family system) published in 1915 in *The Tiger*.³⁷

Another important work of Yang Changji was his "*Xiyang lunlixue shi zhi zhailu*" 西洋伦理学史之摘录 (Extracts from my translations of *A history of Western ethics*) published in 1919.³⁸ It is not simply a translation, rather an expression of what he believed to be essential and fundamental in Western ethical thought. Furthermore, Yang used these propositions to support his notion, namely, valuing the self.

As mentioned in chapter 3, Yang first expressed his two principles -valuing the self and comprehending the present - in an article entitled "Jiaoyu fanlun" (A general discussion of education) published in 1903 in which he summarised his humanistic concerns during the period from 1895 to the start of his study abroad. However, his ideas were substantially enriched through his ten-year study of Western philosophies and his reflections on humanism. His research reached its final formulation in 1919 just before the May Fourth Incident. These ideas were scattered through Yang's post-reformist writings and outlined in an article entitled "Gao Xuesheng" (To students) which appeared in the first issue of *Guomin* [The Citizen] published by the "Student's Association for Saving China" (学生救国会 Xuesheng jiuguo hui).³⁹ Faced with an intensifying national crisis and rapidly changing social values, as well as the intellectual ferment and storm of the student movements, Yang felt more deeply than ever a pressing need to re-pronounce these two notions as the guiding philosophy,

³⁶ Yang Changji, *Riji*, entries of 26, 27 April; 2, 4, 7 May, 17 June and 8, 15 July 1915, pp. 175, 176, 180, 182.

³⁷ Although "Reform of clan and family system" was published in 1915, the main ideas were first elaborated in the summer of 1914. See Yang's *Riji*, entries of 13, 15, 21, 23, 25, 26, 30, 31 July and 5 August 1914, pp. 58-64, 67, 68, 69, 71. For more detailed discussion of Yang's ideas on social reform see chapter 8 of this study.

³⁸ For bibliographic information of Yang's translation of *Xiyang lunlixue shi* see footnote 27.

³⁹ *Guomin* 国民 [Citizen] was a monthly journal of the Student's Association for Saving China which was established on 20 October 1918 in Beijing University as a federation of national student

not only for students, but for the whole nation. Yang believed that the mind played a commanding role in human conduct, therefore, he held that it was the most important task of Chinese intellectuals to provide theories and philosophy as intellectual guidance for Chinese people. Yang made this point clear from the very beginning of the article. The first paragraph reads:

At present our most pressing task is to set up a central idea to unify the minds of the whole nation. The difference between human beings and animals lies in thought (思想 *sixiang*). ... Thought is the mother of reality (事实 *shishi*). Mind issues a thought first, and then puts it into practice. This is true for both individuals and nations. An individual must have his own ideas, a nation her national spirit. ... In recent years, China has experienced tremendous political change as the result of opening the door to the world. This, therefore, has brought about a general situation of confusion and dispute in the intellectual world. ... People and youth hope that learned scholars and intellectuals can get together to discuss and investigate fundamental questions regarding human life and society through comparison between ancient and present, and Chinese and foreign, theories and ideas. Ponder the position of the Chinese nation in the world and what a sensible attitude one should take in the current situation, and then for an individual, an ideal which goes through one's whole life should be established; for the nation, a long-term blueprint should be drawn up. This is the most important and pressing task of our generation.⁴⁰

Clearly, national fate and an individual's life were at the centre of Yang's concerns. The latter in particular, Yang believed, was the key to solving China's problems. Based on his view that mind and thought took a guiding and commanding role in action Yang gave priority to thought movement. He linked self-enlightenment (自觉 *zijue*) with the enlightenment of the whole nation.

If one wants to enlighten people of our nation, he must awake himself (醒自己 *xing ziji*) first. Once he himself is enlightened (自觉 *zijue*), he is able to enlighten the world (觉世 *jueshi*).⁴¹

According to Kant, enlightenment meant man's self-emancipation from religious dogma and being guided by one's own reason supported by his fundamental idea of taking man as the end not the means. For Yang, self-enlightenment meant valuing the self and comprehending the present.

associations. The first issue was published on 1 January 1919. Li Dazhao and Deng Zhongxia were among the contributors to the journal.

⁴⁰ Yang Changji, "Gao xuesheng," *Wenji*, p. 363.

By self-enlightenment (自觉 *zijue*) I mean the enlightenment of oneself, not others. If we combine the idea of valuing the self and that of comprehending the present, the meaning of the self-enlightenment will be illuminated.⁴²

So what were Yang's two principles? This will be the focus of this chapter.

I/We and the Self: the metaphysical and ontological perspective

Let us start with the question, what is Yang's view of I/we and the self?⁴³ At first Yang formulated a view of I/we and the self as existing at the centre of space and time.

When I survey the void (虚空 *xukong*) horizontally, there is nothing in all the vast landscape upon which I can rely except for myself. When I examine time (来劫 *laijie*) vertically, from the most remote past to the present, there is nothing I can hold onto except for the immediate present.⁴⁴

For Yang, the present was not a general concept, but referred to the immediate present moment of one's real life. Therefore, for Yang, the self existed at the juncture of time and space. This view of the self as the centre of the universe was supported by Yang's clear awareness of distinctions between self and other, subject and object.

I am between Heaven and Earth, thus, I am the subject (主 *zhu*) and all beings in the world (天下 *tianxia*) are objects (宾 *bin*); I am of primary importance (重 *zhong*), while all beings in the world are secondary (轻 *qing*); there is no one in the world except me upon whom I can rely; there is no principle in the world except the principle of my mind (吾心之理 *wuxin zhi li*) in which I can believe.⁴⁵

To view the self as a subject of perception and action enabled Yang to go further to assert boldly the supreme value and primary importance of an individual and his mind. Apparently, an ontological argument of existence and mind was not part of Yang's central concerns. And the awareness of the difference between subject from

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 364.

⁴² Ibid, p. 365.

⁴³ It should be noted here that in classical Chinese *wo* (我) could mean I, we and the self. *Wu* (吾) is another alternative. It means I/we and my/our. When *wu* is combined with *ren* (人), the term *wuren* means myself/ourselves

⁴⁴ Parallel phrases can be seen in Yang's article "Jiaoyu fanlun" which appeared in *Youxue yibian*, 1903. They also can be found in Mao Zedong's "Classroom notes. 1913-4." See *Mao wengao*, pp. 601-2. In 1919, Yang repronounced it in his article "To Students" in *Citizen* as an essence of his two notions. For English translation see *Mao's Road to Power*, vol. 1, p. 39. A slight modification has been made by me.

object did not lead Yang to accept an outlook which viewed the object as being opposed to the subject. This is because Yang's view of ego or self was linked to his view of man or person which was deeply rooted in the Confucian tradition.

As discussed in chapter 2, Yang's view of man and selfhood mainly derived from the Confucian key idea of *cheng*. Cheng was not simply a psychological and ethical concept but had a metaphysical dimension.⁴⁶ It denoted a human reality which was a ground for self-knowledge in terms of a process toward an ever-deepening subjectivity and for man's participation in the heavenly process of creativity and transformation.⁴⁷

"Cheng is the way of Heaven."⁴⁸ Cheng therefore possessed all that was attributed to the way of Heaven and Earth, and, ontologically, seen as the foundation of all existence.⁴⁹ "The attainment of cheng is the way of man (人之道 *ren zhi dao*)."⁵⁰ The sage, as the most authentic and genuine man, was the very embodiment of perfect *cheng*.⁵¹ Thus Zhou Dunyi suggested that "Sincerity is the foundation of the sage," and "sagehood is nothing but sincerity."⁵² Among the Song Neo-Confucians, Zhou Dunyi was the first to reaffirm the foremost importance of "learning to be a sage," which laid the cornerstone of the whole enterprise of Confucian education to be learning to be a human. According to Confucian logic, "only he who has the most cheng can develop his nature to the utmost."⁵³ This "nature" was nothing but "humanity," the moral consciousness or mind in Confucian terms, which was inherent in everyone. The formation of the cosmos and the world was the result of

⁴⁵ Yang Changji, "Jiaoyu fanlun," p. 868.

⁴⁶ A modern study shows that the term *cheng* was first given a moral metaphysical significance in the *Doctrine of the Mean*. See Luke J. Sim with James T. Bretzke, "The notion of sincerity (ch'eng) in the Confucian classics" (hereafter, "Notion of sincerity") *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 21(1994), p. 180.

⁴⁷ Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality*, (1989), p. 25, 72-3. See also Luke J. Sim, with James T. Bretzke, "The notion of sincerity (ch'eng)," p. 179.

⁴⁸ *Doctrine of Mean*, chap 20, pt. 18 in Legge, p. 413.

⁴⁹ *Cheng* is the beginning and the end of things.

⁵⁰ *Doctrine of Mean*, chap 20, pt. 18 in Legge, p. 413.

⁵¹ *Doctrine of Mean*, chap 20, reads "He who possesses *cheng* is the one who hits upon what is right without effort and apprehends without thinking. He is naturally and easily in harmony with the Way. Such a man is a sage." See Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 107.

⁵² Zhou Dunyi, *Penetrating the Book of Changes*, chap. 1, pt.; chap.2, pt.2, in Chan Wing-tsit, *A source book*, pp. 465, 466.

⁵³ *Doctrine of Mean*, chap. 22. For English translation see Tu Wei-ming, "The Neo-Confucian concept of man," p. 73.

unending interaction and integration of yin and yang, two essential forces of energy. Man was among the myriad creatures in this ceaseless process of generation and transformation, however, “it is man alone who receives [the Five Agents] in their highest excellence, and therefore, he is most intelligent.”⁵⁴ At the same time, man was also entrusted with a cosmic status. Those who are absolutely *cheng* (至诚 *zhicheng*) could form a trinity with Heaven and Earth and participate in the “transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth.”⁵⁵ Man was at the centre of the universe, but was not prescribed as being either in contrast to the universe or with aiming to conquer nature, but rather for the sake of achieving harmony with nature and universe at the highest level. This unique approach made the Confucian concept of man very different both from Western anthropocentrism and the traditional Judeo-Christian notion of man and self.

Yang’s version of forming one body with Heaven and Earth was based on Mencius’ notion “All things are already complete in oneself,” an ontological understanding of the self.⁵⁶ This notion denoted not only the foremost importance attached to the position of the individual by Mencius, but also a mysterious strand of his thought. As Feng Youlan points out, this mysticism implied a state in which man and universe unified into oneness, because Confucians believed that the original state of universe was a unity of the spirit of the universe with that of the individual. If there were distinctions between the self and other, man and things, inner and outer and the self and universe, it was because of not being *cheng*. That was why, immediately following the sentence “All things are already complete in oneself” Mencius claimed that “There is no greater delight than to be conscious of *cheng* on self-examination.”⁵⁷

Zhang Zai’s ontological view of the human and doctrine of *qi* was another important source for Yang’s view of forming one body with Heaven and Earth. In his diary of 1894, Yang wrote,

⁵⁴ Zhou Dunyi, *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate* in Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 463.

⁵⁵ *Doctrine of Mean*, chap. 22.

⁵⁶ Yang Changji, “Diary of 1894”, *Wenji*, p. 24. For Mencius’s words see *Mencius*, 7A.4, in Legge, p. 450.

⁵⁷ Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo zhexue shi*, pp. 164-5. For Mencius’s words see *Ibid*.

The faculty of hearing results from sound vibrations from Heaven and Earth falling on the ears; and the faculty of seeing from the illumination of the sun and the moon; the *qi* of the body is identical to the *qi* circulating in the Great Vacuity (太虚之气所流行 *taixu zhi qi suo liuxing*). ‘People are my brothers and sisters, things are my companions;’ Heaven is my canopy; Earth is my mat. By pondering on it in silence, [then you will understand] that there is just one breath (一息), through which the reason of the existence of the past and of the present interpenetrates and fuses; and Heaven and Earth are already complete in a single person.⁵⁸

Qi and the Great Vacuity were the key concepts of Zhang Zai’s metaphysics. It was Zhang Zai who had established for the mind an objective cosmic basis that enabled later Neo-Confucian philosophers to elevate the human mind to the same high level as the heavenly mind or original mind.⁵⁹ The above paragraph shows that *qi* was essential in shaping Yang’s notion of unity of Heaven with man. Because the *qi* within one’s body was the same *qi* which flowed ceaselessly in the universe, Yang could use *qi* to make a link between Mencius’s well-known notion “All things are already complete in oneself” and Zhang Zai’s moral ecological view of man. Just on this ground Yang embraced another distinct characteristic of the Confucian concept of the self, namely, seeing the self as existing at the centre of relationships.⁶⁰ Yang stressed this view of the self to even greater extent in his diary of 1903, which he used as the basis of his lectures on self-cultivation.

My/our body (吾身 *wu shen*) is the centre of the physical world (体魄界 *tipo jie*); my/our mind and soul (心灵 *xinling*) is/are the centre of the spiritual world (灵魂界 *linghun jie*). In a word, I/we must be taken as the dominant factor among the myriad things in the world. The ruler is mine/ours, the father is mine/ours, the teacher is mine/ours teacher, the people and things (民物 *min wu*) are mine/ours, and Heaven and Earth are mine/ours.⁶¹

This message smacked of a strong tone of Western anthropocentrism, which placed man at the centre of the universe from both rationalist and axiological perspectives. Yang’s approach, being concerned more with the problem of the position and value

⁵⁸ Yang Changji, “Diary of 1894,” *Wenji*, pp. 10-11. For Zhang Zai’s philosophy see chapter 1, and for Zhang’s influence on Yang’s thought and outlook see chapter 2 of this study.

⁵⁹ For Zhang Zai’s doctrine of *qi* and his metaphysics, see Tang Chün-i, “Chang Tsai’s theory of mind and its metaphysical basis” in *Philosophy East & West*, 6.2 (July 1956):113-136.

⁶⁰ For modern studies of the Confucian view of the self as the centre of relationships see Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius – the Secular as Sacred* (1972), especially p. 34, and Tu Wei-ming’s *Confucian Thought* (1985).

⁶¹ Yang Changji, “Riji (1905),” *Wenji*, p.24.

of the individual in the universe, made him different from the so-called “realist” position of humanism which assumed a contrast between an external, independently existing world and the conscious human subject. Yang also believed that man had the ability to know natural law in order to control nature, a view different from the so-called “idealist” position which argued for a world that existed only as the object of human thought.⁶²

On the ground of viewing the self as co-creator with Heaven Yang went further to embrace the extreme idealistic line of Confucian tradition from Mencius to Lu Xiangshan which identified the self with the universe. Yang’s arguments were revealed clearly in his discussions on the issue “for the sake of the self” (为己 *weiji*) and the achievement of “non-self” (无我 *wuwo*).

Confucius says, ‘In ancient times, one studied for the sake of oneself.’
Mencius says, ‘All things are already complete in oneself (or me/us).’
Why does [Confucian teaching] teach the idea of ‘for the sake of the self’
(为己 *weiji*) and [at the same time] call for [achievement of a state of]
non-self (无我 *wuwo*)? ⁶³

Yang was fully aware of the fundamental significance of the question for the entire Confucian project of learning to be human, raising it in his lectures on self-cultivation.⁶⁴ Apart from Mencius’ notion “All things are already complete in oneself,” Lu Xiangshan’s concept of the self and universe provided another powerful argument for Yang to interpret the Confucian theme of learning for the sake of the self. As the chief architect of the idealistic school of Neo-Confucianism Lu Xiangshan’s metaphysics and ethics were marked by his emphasis on oneness and the commonality of mind. This idealistic view is best seen in his well-known notion “The universe is my mind, and my mind is the universe.”⁶⁵ Lu held that “The affairs of the universe (宇宙 *yuzhou*) are my own affairs. My own affairs are the affairs of the universe.” These assumptions formed the basis of Yang’s argument for identifying the self/selves with the universe. Yang repeated Lu’s words and asserted,

⁶²“Man the rational subject” from the entry of “Philosophical anthropology” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2000 (DVD-Ram).

⁶³ Yang Changji, “Dahaizhai riji” (1903), *Wenji*, p. 24. For Confucius’ saying see *Analects*, 14.25. For Mencius’s saying see *Mencius*, 7A.4.

⁶⁴ See Yang Changji’s draft of questions for examination, in *Riji*, entry of 21 November 1914, p. 120.

⁶⁵ Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 579.

‘In this connection [we talk of] ‘for the sake of the self.’⁶⁶ For Lu Xiangshan, if there was no distinction between the subject and object, there would be no distinction between the self and others. But for Mencius, the answer lay with his dichotomous view of man - the “great body” (大体 *dati*) and the “small body” (小体 *xiaoti*). Yang taught Mao Zedong and his students in Changsha,

Mencius said, ‘Some parts of the body are noble, and some ignoble; some great, and some small. ... He who nourishes the little belonging to him is a little man, and he who nourishes the great is a great man.’⁶⁷

In Mencius, the “great body” denoted the essence of human nature or uniqueness that was inherent in everyone as the defining characteristic of being human.⁶⁸ That was nothing other than the mind in which man’s “four beginnings of moral sense” dwelled and whose function was to think. Therefore, Mencius suggested, on the one hand, “we must not allowed the smaller to injure the greater or the ignoble to injure the noble;” on the other head, “if we first build up the great part of our nature, then the small part cannot overcome it. It is simply this that makes a man great.”⁶⁹ In this light Yang asserted,

Neither must we allow the small to injure the great, nor the ignoble the noble. That is what I mean by non-self.⁷⁰

In Mencius the small part denoted an individual’s selfishness and that which caused the distinction between man and Heaven. In accordance with the same line Yang defined,

The individual self (一个之我 *yige zhi wo*) is the small self; the universal self (宇宙之我 *yuzhou zhi wo*) is the great self. The individual self is the physical self; the universal self is the spiritual self.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Yang Changji, “Dahaizhai riji” (1903), *Wenji*, p. 24. For the English translation of Lu Xiangshan’s saying see Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 580.

⁶⁷ See Mao Zedong’s “Jiangtang lu,” *Mao wengao*, p. 590. For English translation see Legge, *Mencius*, 6A:14, p. 416.

⁶⁸ D.C. Lau argued that Mencius nowhere denied that appetites for food and sex were natural. All he asserts was that the proposition that human nature was what we are born with could not explain the unique human quality. See his “On Mencius’ use of the method of analogy in argument,” “Appendix 5” in his English translation *Mencius*, p. 243. Tu Wei-ming shares the same view, See his “Mencian perception of moral self-development,” in his *Humanity and Self-Cultivation*, p. 61.

⁶⁹ *Mencius*, 6A:14, 15, in Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, pp. 58-9. A slight modification has been made.

⁷⁰ Yang Changji, “Dahaizhai riji” (1903), *Wenji*, p. 24.

⁷¹ See Mao Zedong’s “Jiangtang lu,” *Mao wengao*, p. 590. For English translation see *Mao’s Road to Power*, vol. 1, p. 21.

This spiritual part of self was nothing but humanity (仁 *ren*) which was endowed in everyone's mind by Heaven. However, it was latent and needed to be activated, nourished and extended. For this reason Confucian had attached the utmost importance to self-cultivation and supported "learning for the sake of the self," not for the sake of others, thus denoting another distinct characteristic of the notion of the self, namely, to view it as a dynamic and unceasing process of spiritual development.⁷² In the course of this unceasing spiritual cultivation, the self was required to deepen and broaden the noble part or the "great self," in order to achieve self-transcendence, that is, while the self was realising its original nature, it must struggle ceaselessly to eliminate selfish and egoistic desire.⁷³ In this connection Yang asserted to his students, "If I keep enlarging and enriching my own world (我之界 *wo zhi jie*), the whole universe will be an extended self (大我 *da wo*)."⁷⁴ Elsewhere Yang set forth the point, "Modern ethical theorists put forward the doctrine of self-realisation. By the self is meant the 'great self' which is identified with the universe (以宇宙为一体之大我 *yi yuzhou wei yiti zhi dawo*)."⁷⁵

Zhang Zai developed Mencius' notion of building up the great part of one's nature and elaborated the doctrine of "enlarging one's mind" so as to "enter into all things in the world." This idea exerted a profound influence on Yang's notions of "extended self" and the self identifying with the universe. Furthermore, Yang was also inspired by the philosophical theology of Friedrich E. D. Schleiermacher, the most notable German-speaking theologian of the nineteenth century.

Schleiermacher has opened up a new era in philosophy of theology. ... Like aesthetics, religion is intuitive, taking the whole as the object of knowledge. In front of God differences between individuals are eliminated. Religious people hold that the particularity manifests itself in the generality. Hence they believe that every particular event is God's operation; on the one hand, God is seen in all things, on the other hand in God all things are expressed. Thereby they feel that they are identified with all things, and then feel they are identified with the absolute infinite (绝对无限者 *juedui wuxian zhe*). That is why religion is

⁷² See Tu Wei-ming, "Selfhood and Others" in his *Confucian Thought* (1985), pp. 113, 125-128.

⁷³ Tu Wei-ming, "Neo-Confucian religiosity and human-relatedness," in his *Confucian Thought*, (1985), p. 137.

⁷⁴ See Mao Zedong's "Jiangtang lu," *Mao wengao*, p. 590. For English translation see *Mao's Road to Power*, vol. 1, p. 21.

⁷⁵ Yang's "Jiaoyu shan dang zhuyi zhi dian," *Wenji*, p. 49. For Yang's view of the "great self" see his *Riji*, the entry of 9 October 1914, p. 94.

so. Because of the sense of identity, they feel a complete dependence on God. ... This kind of feeling of dependence (依存感情 *yicun ganqing*) by no means inhibits one's will, or causes one to feel inferior. Rather it is perceived as joyfulness for identifying with God. ... He who exists in and depends on the universe, is he who shares the universal spirit; he who lives upon the Absolute is he who is able to turn the limited into the unlimited.⁷⁶

The theme that one could transgress the boundary of one's individual limits when one identified himself with God was not alien to Yang. He immediately drew parallels between Schleiermacher and both Shao Yong (邵雍 1011-1077) and Zhang Zai.

Shao Yaofu's (namely, Shao Yong) poem reads, 'Enlarging the mind to be as great as Heaven, how many people could reach this state? My nature is Heaven and Heaven is equal to me, nothing is greater than to find substantial principle in the subtle texts.' Eastern and Western worthies have their own insights. Through reading them one can open up one's mind. Schleiermacher held that the feeling of dependence did not mean inhibiting one's own will. It is similar to Rousseau's view that complying with the law was by no means surrender [of his right to authority]. Zhang Hengqu (namely, Zhang Zai) says, 'because I/we can perceive all things in the world, I am greater [than all things]; because the Way can enter into all things and embodied in myself (体物我 *ti wu wo*), the Way is greater [than all things and me/us]. Therefore, the *junzi* is greater than the Way. The Way described by Hengqu is similar to the Absolute described by Schleiermacher.'⁷⁷

Yang was fully aware that the most formidable problem was how to "establish the self" (立我 *liwo*) while avoiding at the same time falling into the pit of selfish egoism. Therefore, he warned, "There will be no foundation without establishment of the self, [however] self-reliance (自我 *ziwo*) has the defect of becoming narrow-minded and selfish. That is what those who advocate individualism should pay attention to."⁷⁸ However, Yang found the solution in Schleiermacher's notion of a "feeling of dependence" and Zhang Zai's concept of "enlarging one's mind to enter into all things in the world" (大心体物 *daxin tiwu*), transcending the self to achieve a unity with Heaven. Yang's perception of this idea found echoes in the thought of Mao Zedong, who wrote, "Taking the self as the measure, a starting point and criterion are thus established; if placing the same weight on the self and others, there is no starting

⁷⁶ Yang Changji, "Extract" *Wenji*, pp. 360-1.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 361.

point, and the criterion is lost.”⁷⁹ It is interesting to note that Mao here went even further than his teacher in asserting the value of egoism.

The starting point of altruism is the self, and altruism is related to the self. It is impossible to say that any mind is purely altruistic without any idea of self-interest. Nothing in the world takes the other as its starting point, and the self does not seek to benefit anything in the world that is totally unrelated to the self. Otherwise, “individual personality” (个人之人格 *geren zhi rengen*), “autonomy” (自律 *zili*), and “freedom” (自由 *ziyou*) would be absurd. These concepts are indeed a noble egoism, an egoism of the spirit. If I take a broad view, it is reasonable to say that mankind is the great self (大我 *dawo*), all living things are the great selves and the universe is the great self. So why not dare to speak up self-interest? And why should self-interest be unworthy? ... Ultimately the individual (小己 *xiaoji*) comes first.⁸⁰

The paragraph shows clearly that how Mao pushed Yang’s point to an extreme polarity. While Mao affirmed the value of egoism without reservation, Yang retained the Mencian dichotomy of the great self and the small self and Zhang Zai’s “enlarging one’s mind.” This idea of the self was significant for it laid the cornerstone for his principle of “valuing the self” and his advocacy of a public-minded individualism. This is a point to which I shall return.

He who “built up the great part of his nature” and extended it to the ultimate, could be called a man possessing ultimate *cheng* (至诚 *zhicheng*). A man of this kind was assumed by Confucians and Neo-Confucians to have a transforming power because of the characteristics of *cheng*. Those who attained the ultimate *cheng* could not only move others but also exert a transforming influence on all things (至诚动物 *zhicheng dongwu*). Yang was fully convinced by this assumption. A self with cosmic transforming power characterised another important aspect of Yang’s notion of the self. How could one having the ultimate *cheng* transform and move people and things? Western science provided a new inspiration to Yang. His diaries written in the post-reform movement period show clearly the influence of Western scientific knowledge, and particular of the mechanics on Yang’s new interpretation of the transforming power of *cheng*.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Mao Zedong, “Lunlixue yuanli pizhu” (Marginal Notes to Friedrich Paulsen, *A System of Ethics*), *Mao wengao*, p. 144.

At first Yang was concerned with how a person with *cheng* who held a humble position in society could influence others in a superior position, and conversely, how a man in a superior position could move others inferior to him. The answers were found in the working principles of levers and pulleys. He wrote:

A light thing can make a heavy load move slowly but with increased [input] force, and a large wheel can make a small wheel turn fast but with reduced output force. For instance, lifting a stone weighing one thousand *jin* (500 kg) by using a lever may require an input force of hundred *jin* (50 kg) at one end of the lever. When you press the lever downward one feet, the stone at the other end rises up one inch. But the two forces are equal (二力相等 *erli xiang deng*). This is an example of moving a heavy load by using a small effort (轻物运重 *qingwu yun zhong*). A waterwheel-operated mill is another example. The wheel weights ten thousand *jin* (5000kg) and the millstone weights five hundreds *ji* (250kg). While the wheel spins a full circle, the millstone turns twenty circles. Two forces are equal. This is the case of turning a light [and small] wheel by using a heavy [and large] wheel (重物运轻 *zhongwu yi qing*).⁸¹

Generally speaking, Yang explained the gifts of principles by referring to levers and mechanical advantage, though some parts of his interpretation may not be fully accurate. Indeed, Yang did not intend to acquire comprehensive knowledge of mechanical force, such as what a second class lever is, or what movement means, his concern was to apply it in order to understand the transforming power of *cheng*.

These principles are wonderful and can be applied with benefit in dealing with human affairs. In a case when others are powerful and influential, while I am humble, to transform them depends on to accumulation of *cheng*. This is nothing other than accelerating accumulation (增速 *zengsu*). “Shun did everything that was possible to serve his parents, and succeeded, in the end, in pleasing Gu Sou (瞽叟),” this is because of the accumulation of the efforts.⁸² Shen Baoxu (申包胥) cried for seven days and nights in front of the Qin court, and in the end persuaded the King of

⁸⁰ Ibid, *Mao wengao*, 141. For English translation see *Mao's Road to Power*, vol. 1, pp. 200-1. Modification has been made.

⁸¹ Yang Changji, “Dahaizhai riji” (1903), *Wenji*, p. 21.

⁸² Gu Sou was Shun's father, the name suggests that he was a blind man. The sentence is cited in *Mencius*, chapter 4, part 1, paragraph 28. For the translation see D. C. Lau, *Mencius*, p. 127. Shun (舜) was a legendary figure and recognised by Confucius as a sage-king. He was well-known for his filial piety. Gu Sou remarried after his wife died and had a son named Xiang (象). Gu Sou indulged Xiang and bullied Shun. And Xiang even tried to kill Shun. However, Shun never complained, but on the contrary, still treated Gu Sou with filial piety and Xiang, his half-brother with benevolence. Finally, the father was moved and the brother was changed. Mencius used the story to explain how Shun won the people's trust and the respect of the entire empire through his filial piety and benevolence.

Qin to send troops to Chu in order to save his country.⁸³ This is because of the accumulation of strength (of sincerity). Gu Sou was in a superior position while Shun in an inferior one; Qin was in a powerful position while Baoxi was in a humble position. Without accumulation of *cheng* how they could have been moved.⁸⁴

As for the example of moving light things by using a heavy input force, Yang referred to Confucius.

If I am an influential and powerful man, others are men of little importance, I can use my superiority to move them, what I should do is only to enhance the force. Confucius had three thousand disciples, this demonstrates the profundity and strength [of his thought]: The Six Classics were handed down through generations to be taught until today; this also demonstrates his influential power. If I were an influential man (势重 *shizhong*), others would follow me in order to change themselves. Without the power that Confucius had, how could there be so many worthies? Without the influence possessed by Confucius, how could one's name and thought live through all times?⁸⁵

Based on the principle of moving light things by using a heavy device, Yang suggested emphatically that it was most important to know how to speed up the accumulation of *cheng* for people of no status and to strengthen those who already had influence. For Yang the way to achieve this was through self-cultivation, which represented a process not only of moral and spiritual self-discipline but also of the accumulation of knowledge. Otherwise Yang would not have mentioned the "Six classics," the embodiment of Confucius' thought.

Yang then considered the question of how one could use *cheng* to reach other people. Again he got inspiration from principles of mechanics.

To move a large load through a small effect one relies on a lever. To move a light thing through a heavy device one relies on a wheel. This is because input force easily carried out the work (通其力也 *tong qi li ye*). By what means can we allow our sincerity of mind-heart to reach others? Countenance (色 *se*), demeanour (貌 *mao*), speech (语言 *yuyan*), writing (文字 *wenzi*), things (物 *wu*), affairs (事 *shi*), and the person (人 *ren*) are the means by which we are able to express our sincerity. The way of application is the same as that of levers and wheels. What we should do is only to put them in the proper place [and time]. "By looking cordial when it comes to one's countenance," our sincerity will appear, others can see it. "By appearing respectful when it comes to our demeanour,"

⁸³ Shen Baoxu was an aristocrat and high-ranking officer of the state of Chu. In 506 B.C. the state of Wu invaded the Chu.

⁸⁴ Yang Changji, "Dahaizhai riji" (1903), *Wenji*, p. 21.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-2.

our sincerity would be expressed in our behaviour and others could see it. “By being conscientious when speaking,”⁸⁶ our sincerity would be present in speech and others could hear it, and when it appears in writings others could read it. When we engage ourselves in dealing with affairs (施力于事 *shili yu shi*) our sincerity will be displayed in our actions and extend to others. When we engage ourselves in dealing with things (施力于物 *shili yu wu*) our sincerity will be displayed in these things and extend to others. When we engage ourselves in dealing with people (施力于人 *shili yu ren*), our sincerity will be displayed in others and thereby extend to others. It doesn’t matter if we don’t want to reform people. However, if this is the case, we have to pay attention to the device through which the input force works.⁸⁷

For Yang, the devices required to move things were levers and wheels, while in regarding to people, countenance, demeanours, speech, and affairs were required. Therefore the quality of the device was of vital importance.

If the levers and wheels themselves are not strong enough, they cannot be used to move loads. If one’s countenance, demeanours, speech and writing, dealing with things are not sincere enough they cannot move others.⁸⁸

Implicit in the quotation is Yang’s reaffirmation of a time-honoured Confucian assumption and belief that those who possess *cheng* can fully develop their own nature, the nature of others, and the nature of things. And only then would they be able to form the ultimate trinity with heaven and earth, and to participate fully in the cosmic creative process. The way to possessing *cheng* is through accumulation (积 *ji*).

Accumulating myriad tiny particles constitutes a long and strong lever; while through accumulating vast amounts of benignity (温 *wen*), respectfulness (恭 *gong*), loyalty (忠 *zhong*) and reverence (敬 *jing*) one can achieve the ultimate virtue and good.⁸⁹

The idea of accumulation (积 *ji*) became prominent in Yang’s thought. For him the principle *ji* was almost universal and could be applied in any cases, such as acquiring knowledge, and the achievement of either sagehood or China’s wealth and power, all depended on “accumulation.” Elsewhere in his diaries published in 1903 Yang noted,

⁸⁶ Yang cited these phrases and sentences from *Analects*, chapter 16:10. For the English translation see D. C. Lau, pp.140-1.

⁸⁷ Yang Changji, “Dahaizhai rijì” (1903), *Wenji*, p. 22

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Heaven obtains its firmness through the accumulation of the essence of numerous things (众精 *zhongjing*), sages achieve strength through the accumulation of virtues of numerous other worthies. The sage is one who completes himself through the accumulation of the virtues of other worthies; the worthy is one who completes oneself through the accumulation of virtues of other people; human beings are those who complete themselves through the accumulation of things. The prestige of a celebrated Confucian is gained through an accumulation of *cheng*: his disciples were delighted to be convinced by the force of his arguments. The might of a general is obtained through an accumulation of the courage of his soldiers. A carpenter's masterpiece depends on an accumulation of his experience and skill through hard work.⁹⁰

From his Confucian grounding Yang had formed a view that one's knowledge and *cheng* could not be achieved in one day, but required accumulation through many years.⁹¹ From reading examples of mechanics Yang learned how to accumulate energy gradually and apply it properly and efficiently. This principle could be applied not only in case of *cheng*, but also in reforming society.

People who are good at using energy depend on reserving their energy in advance. They can either reserve energy little by little, then release it once and for all, or reserve energy all at once and use it gradually. For instance, when building a sluice gate to retain water, the water will be vigorous once released, because of the accumulation of each drop of water. Another example is producing steam by boiling water. Water heats up to evaporate into steam, the power of the steam is indeed great; however, this was done by heating up water slowly over a relatively long period of time. As you can see, these are examples of preserving energy slowly then unleashing it all at once. Again this can be understood by the mechanism of a pile driver. Manpower is required to lift up the hammer that drives the pile, when released, it will hit the pile with great speed and power. Gravity causes the hammer to drop down on the pile, but manpower provides the force to raise the hammer. In fact, these two forces are essentially equal as work done by manpower is transferred to gravity. If pulling up once requires an effort of 10 *jin*, (5 kg) then pulling up one hundred times would accumulate a force of one thousand *jin* (500 kg); the force of hitting then totals one thousand *jin* (500 kg). If we want to strengthen China, we have to accumulate the force of the common people (小民 *xiaomin*). Scholar-officials (士大夫 *shidafu*) accumulate works of "teaching and transforming of people" (教化之功 *jiaohua zhi gong*), while each individual (小民 *xiaomin*) accumulates his own knowledge, experience, creative works and achievements. If accumulation continues, in the course of time people will be enlightened.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 23.

⁹¹ Yang Changji, "Dahuazhai riji, 1892, 1893," *Wenji*, pp. 4,6,7.

When people are enlightened, the power of their initiative will grow so that nothing can restrain it.⁹²

Based on this argument, Yang advocated constantly his idea that the “*junzi* should accumulate *cheng* in order to establish a foundation of [moral] deed and example” (积诚立行 *jicheng lixing*), because he believed that only a man of *cheng* could take on the heavy mission of “transforming vulgar knowledge and reforming bad social customs.” To carry out such a great task required the self to possess strength and independence, because it was easy for one to “drift along with the stream of convention and circumstance (随俗苟且 *suisu gouqie*).”⁹³

Taking this into account, Yang also attached importance to the fulcrum,

A lever necessarily requires a pivot, if the pivot is not firm enough, it cannot shoulder a heavy burden. There must be a point on which we lean if we want to extent our *cheng* to others (达吾诚意于人 *da wu chengyi yu ren*), thus choosing a pivot is of utmost importance.⁹⁴

The pivot had two meanings. With regard to relationships between people, or between oneself and others, it acts as an intermediary. As for oneself it refers to one’s intellectual mooring and foothold on which one could establish oneself.

For people who have never met before to become acquainted with each other requires introduction by a middleman, that is the pivot. When Qi Huan gong 齐宣公 (?-643 B.C., King of Qi) chose Guan Zhong 管仲 because of Bao Shuya 鲍叔牙’s recommendation, Bao was the “pivot” (intermediary). Han Gao di 汉高帝 (namely, Emperor Liu Bang 刘邦 (256 or 247 B.C. to 195 B. C.) chose Han Xin 韩信 (? – 196 B.C.) as General because of Xiao He 萧何 (? –193 B.C., Minister of Emperor Liu Bang). Without Bao’s force how could the importance (重 *zhong*, lit, weight) of Guan Zhong affect (达 *da*) Huan Gong? Without Xiao He’s force how could Han Xin’s importance affect Emperor Liu Bang?⁹⁵

In connection with the second meaning, Yang drew a parallel between the notion of *zhong*, or “centrality,” the most fundamental category of Confucian moral metaphysics, and the principle of central gravity in Western physics.

Weight (*zhong*, 重) depends on force (*li*, 力) [of gravity], while force (*li*, 力) of gravity] is independent on weight (*zhong*, 重). The force [of

⁹² Yang Changji, “Dahaizhai riji” (1903), *Wenji*, p. 24.

⁹³ Yang Changji, “Dahuaizhai riji, 1891, 1893, 1894, 1895, ” *Wenji*, pp.2, 7, 10, 12. “Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi,” *Wenji*, p. 46. “Lunyu leichao,” *Wenji*, p. 72, and “Gao xuesheng,” *Wenji*, p. 367.

⁹⁴ Yang Changji, “Dahaizhai riji” (1903), *Wenji*, p. 22.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 22-3.

gravity] has effect (功 *gong*) on weight, while weight has no effect (*gong*) on the force. The *Doctrine of the Mean* says, “He stands in the middle position and does not lean to one side,” and “Does he depend on anything else?” When the centre of gravity (重心点 *zhongxin dian*) of an object is right in the middle position, the object can stand erect and not incline. If the centre of gravity is beyond the object, it can topple over. The establishment of oneself is exactly the same. We should not allow our “centre of gravity” to go beyond the scope of our ability, then we can establish ourselves. Otherwise, we must be pulled away (distracted/attracted) by other objects and cannot stand firmly.⁹⁶

In the Confucian tradition, the concept of “centrality” or “centeredness” (中 *zhong*) had two-fold dimensions: as an ontological concept, it denoted the ultimate ground of existence, or in Confucian terminology, “the great foundation of the world.”⁹⁷ Confucians believed that “centrality,” as the most refined and absolutely irreducible quality, was granted by Heaven to each human being. “What Heaven imparts to man is called human nature. To follow our nature is called the Way.”⁹⁸ Applying “centrality” to man referred to a mental state of tranquillity of the inner self, “before the feeling of pleasure, anger sorrow, and joy are aroused.”⁹⁹ However, “centrality” was hidden and manifested itself in “harmony” (和 *he*) denoting “when these feelings are aroused and each and all attain due measure and degree.” Furthermore, “When centrality and harmony are realised to the highest degree, heaven and earth will attain their proper order and all things will flourish.”¹⁰⁰ In order to achieve centrality and harmony, self-cultivation in the sense of an unceasing process of self-knowledge and self-discipline was thus required. Only he who achieved *cheng*, could, “without an effort, hit what is right (中 *zhong*), and apprehend, without the exercise of thought; - he is the sage who naturally and easily embodies the [right] way (从容中道 *congrong zhong dao*).”¹⁰¹ In this regard Yang took the principle of “centrality,” namely, being one-sided neither mentally and intellectually, nor being influenced by others in whatever situation, as the foundation of establishment of oneself as an autonomous agent.

⁹⁶ Yang Changji, “Dahaizhai riji” (1903), *Wenji*, p. 23. *Doctrine of the Mean*, chap. 10 and 32 in Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, pp. 100, 112.

⁹⁷ *Doctrine of the Mean*, chap. 1, see Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 98.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

High and low, and the four directions are called *yu*, and time from the ancient past to the future is called *zhou*. Having undertaken an intensive inquiry and pondered things over and over, [we] can grasp the unchangeable principle in the fast changing world (参变知常 *canbian zhichang*). This enables us to avoid being confused and lost and to find out [our] foothold where we can stand upright and independently.¹⁰²

Yang was clearly aware of the difficulty of defining what was “centrality,” because measures and values varied along with change of times and circumstances; however, he believed that there was still a kind of constant and universal principle transcending time and space. While Yang warned students against taking a particular principle as an ultimate truth, he declared his own principles.

The ancients (古人 *guren*) had their standard for centrality (中 *zhong*), and the moderns (今人 *jinren*) have their measure for centrality. Therefore, it is impossible to ‘blend the disparities of ten thousand years into one complete purity (参万岁而成一纯 *can wansui er cheng yichun*).’ Taking the centrality of a certain time as the centrality is bound to injure the great for the small.¹⁰³

Yang’s argument is very likely a response to Wang Fuzhi’s remark,

The arguments over what is advantage and what is disadvantage, and what is right and what is wrong, varied and were changed constantly as time went by. ... What has been regarded as ignoble (贱 *jian*) is seen as noble (贵 *gui*) by the contemporary view; what is regarded as being right now, will be seen as wrong in the future. A wind blows from north to south, its sound varies as it moves. If he ‘blends the disparities of ten thousand years into one complete purity,’ the great constant principle (大常 *dachang*) would be untenable.”¹⁰⁴

By comparing between these two paragraphs Wang Fuzhi’s influence on Yang is evident. “Change and transformation” (变易 *bianyi*) and “constant principle” (常则 *changze*) were prominent categories in Confucian philosophy. Confucius was the first to speak of change and transformation as basic universal truths. The Cheng-Zhu Confucian tradition emphasised nevertheless that changes and transformation took

¹⁰¹ *Doctrine of the Mean*, chap 20, section 18, see Legge, p. 413. My account of “centrality” is drawn from Tu Wei-ming’s *Centrality and Commonality*, a comprehensive modern study in English (State University of New York Press, 1989), see especially pp. 19-21, 134-5.

¹⁰² Yang Changji, “Dahuazhai riji” (1903), *Wenji*, p. 26.

¹⁰³ Ibid. The quotation derived from chapter 2 “qi wu lun” (The equality of things) of *Zhuangzi*. There are two ways to read the title of chapter 2: *qi wu lun* or *qi wulun*, which reflects a scholarly controversy on understanding of *Zhuangzi*’s idea of identity of subjective and objective, the many and the one, etc. See Huang Jinghong, “Zhuangzi xueshuo zhiyao” (The gifts and important themes of *Zhuangzi*’s thought) in his *Xinyi Zhuangzi duben* (Textbook for a new reading of *Zhuangzi*), Taipei, 1974, pp. 36-7. For English translation see Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 189.

¹⁰⁴ Wang Fuzhi, *Zhuangzi jie* [Interpretation of *Zhuangzi*] vol. 2, p. 26.

place according to certain rules and laws, that is, *li* or “principles.” Wang Fuzhi’s elaboration of the concepts of “change” and “constant principle” (常则 *changze*) was the most comprehensive and profound after the Northern Song.¹⁰⁵ Like his forefathers, Yang maintained that “every thing and matter has its own reason and behind the reasons of things and matters there is a general principle (大例 *dali*). When we grasp this general principle, we are able to cope with any kind of changes without being perplexed by them. How big a joy this is.”¹⁰⁶ This general principle was nothing but centrality and commonality.

Scholars must take our mind/heart as centre, and apply our intelligence (心之灵 *xin zhi ling*) to comprehend Heaven and Earth, and ancient and modern in order to be able to judge what is central. Neither praises the ancient and denies the present, nor does it do the opposite. Neither harms others in order to benefit the self, nor harms the self in order to benefit others. Neither goes against Heaven (天 *tian* or cosmic/natural process) in order to favour man (人 *ren*, or human efforts/process) (逆天任人 *nitian renren*), nor ignores man in order to favour Heaven (废人任天 *feiren rentian*). The *Doctrine of the Mean* says, ‘He stands in the middle position and does not lean to one side.’ And it says also, ‘establish the great foundations of humanity. ... Does he depend on anything else?’ Alas, nothing more can be said about it.¹⁰⁷

Here Yang proposed that only such persons who “stood in the middle position without leaning to one side” could be regarded as having a foundation on which he could become a truly independent individual. And more crucial is that Yang elaborated his principles to judge “the middle position” in what he considered to be three crucial aspects: ancient and modern, the self and the other, and cosmic and human process.

There is no doubt that the concept of the mind stood out in Yang’s perception of the self. The mind was seen as the centre of the spiritual world, as shown in the quotation above. In his early twenties under the influence of the line of idealist Confucianism Yang paid overwhelming attention to mind cultivation and attached the utmost importance to reflection (思 *si*), a principal function of the mind, which has been discussed in chapter 2 and 3. Like most Confucians, a purely epistemological approach to the concept of the mind was not at the centre of his

¹⁰⁵ See Zhang Dainian, *Zhongguo zhixue dagang* [An outline of Chinese philosophy], pp. 94-100.

¹⁰⁶ Yang Changji, “Dahuazhai riji” (1903), *Wenji*, pp. 25-6.

concern. Instead, the mind was treated largely in the perspective of human nature. For Yang, the mind connoted conative, cognitive and affective meanings. The mind was seen epistemologically as the locus of emotion, feeling and volition, and of the “four beginnings of the moral sense.” It functioned as the command of nature and feeling. The other vital function of the mind was reflection, or in Munro’s term “evaluating,” which included perception and reasoning. Yang emphasised and valued particularly the conative and cognitive functions of the mind, because they provided an ontological basis for learning to be human through moral self-cultivation. Furthermore, the mind was regarded as a spontaneous and sufficient fountainhead of moral self-perfection.

On this ground, Yang’s understanding of the self as a subject of conation and cognition was largely enriched through his knowledge of Western psychology and philosophy, as is evident in his essay “An outline of the vital ideas of Western philosophy.” Among these various theories and ideas Yang accepted T. H. Green’s idea of the self, while at the same time skimming off its theological elements. At first man was seen as the only being in the world to possess self-consciousness and the self as a self-conscious subject. In his interpretation of T.H. Green’s doctrine of self-realisation, Yang wrote,

Man is the only being which has the capacity of self-consciousness, that is, he is conscious of his self. Self-consciousness is a basic attribute of a human being.¹⁰⁸

And then the self was viewed as “an integrated system of desires.”

An integrated system of desires (种种欲望之系统 *zhongzhong yuwang zhi xitong*) is called the self. Human beings are different from animals that seek to satisfy an immediate appetite. From one’s self-consciousness one becomes fixed on a desired object and then seeks to obtain gratification through it. This is what is called desire. The self is thus an organic whole in which desires are integrated by a reasonable will (合理的意志 *heli de yizhi*), and personal character is an integration of feelings, desires and thoughts. The aim of desire is not at seeking pleasure, but at originating within oneself the objects which one pursues in action, through which one realises his ideal. In brief, good will is the realisation of self-perfection. This is the aim of desire.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 26. Yang’s quotations from the chapter 10 and 32 of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, in Chan, *A Source Book*, pp. 100 and 112.

¹⁰⁸ Yang Changji, “A various Western ethical theories” *Wenji*, p. 269.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, pp. 270-1.

This conception of the human self is crucial for it paved the way for Yang, on the one hand, to argue against the Kantian ascetic notion of the self which by contrasting reason and desire defined desire as the source of evil and saw morality as an expression of control over any kinds of desires of the self through rationalism; on the other hand, towards a hedonistic view of the self.

Asceticism takes desire as the source of evil, therefore, morality means the eradicating of all desires. This is wrong. Desire itself has no ethical value, however, it is only when one seeks to satisfy particular desire without taking care of others, that the operation of the integrated system of desires as a whole is jeopardised, and evil will result. Man must have desire in order to live. Human life is a process of constantly gratifying desires. Morality derives from the mediation and integration of various desires in accordance with moral laws. Ethical doctrines in the past were not grounded on a firm psychological foundation. Hedonism (快乐主义 *kuaile zhuyi*) holds the self of sentiment, while asceticism maintains the idea of a rational self. They all take one aspect of the self as the whole. The doctrine of self-realisation, which regards the self as an integrated system of desires, including feeling and reason, holds that action of mediation of this self is the essential precondition of morality. This approach can overcome the shortcomings of hedonism, while avoiding the defects of asceticism. It is a well balanced theory, and has therefore gained popularity among most scholars.¹¹⁰

To sum up, Yang's view of the self was no longer a purely Confucian concept. T. H. Green's thought became one of the chief sources of influence among the various Western theories shaping Yang's new version of the self, person and human nature. Human desire was no longer seen as the origin of evil, but, on the contrary, as the essential impulse of human life. The individual self's power to transform others and the world had gained Western scientific ground. I/we or the self (我 *wo*) as an independent subject of perception and action, co-creator, centre of relationships and a being that was aware of consciousness itself as an eternal order, was emphasised to a great extent in Yang's thought.

Individualistic elements

Taking the person as the end. As mentioned above, in 1919 Yang published an article, named "Extracts from my translation of *A History of Western Ethics*." These "extracts" were not simply a copy of his translation of Yoshida Seichi's work, but, along with Yang's commentaries manifested clearly which Western ethical doctrines

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 272.

attracted Yang's attention. The teachings of five Western thinkers who Yang believed were of most importance were included: Rousseau, Kant, T. Lipps, Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and Schleiermacher. The central theme running through the "Extracts" referred to certain core ideas of Western liberal individualism. Kant's ethics, and precisely, the notion of human dignity, or in Yang's term, "a theory of humanity" (人格论 *rengelun*) were emphasised. Yang wrote,

Kant says that humanity (人格 *rengelun*) has an absolute value (绝对价值 *juedui jiazhi*) which is different from the value of other things. Things are valuable merely because they can be used for other purposes (方便 *fangbian*), and all they have is only a relative value. ... Absolute value means that it exists as an end in itself, not for the purpose of use by others. That which cannot be exchanged for other things and exists for the sake of itself means humanity. Humanity has an unconditional and incomparable worth and is independent of rank and merit, thus it is that which deserves authentic respect. We (吾人 *wuren*) must treat humanity whether in our own person or in the person of any other, always as an end, never as a means.¹¹¹

This passage is an interpretation of Kant's idea of "dignity" expressed in chapter 2 of *Groundwork of the metaphysic of morals*.¹¹² For Kant, humanity referred to the special human capacities identified with reason and freedom. It had "an intrinsic value" that is, it "was exalted above all price and so admitted of no equivalent."¹¹³ Kant held that humanity was commonly shared by everyone. Accordingly, respect for the dignity and equality of rational human beings was regarded as a universal ethical principle and a categorical imperative.¹¹⁴ This Kantian humanistic strain of thought exerted huge influence on B. P. Bowne (1847-1910), the principal founder of the American school of personalism.¹¹⁵ Early in the twentieth century the term "personalism" was adopted and applied more systematically by French, German and American philosophers. About this time, idealistic personalism established itself in England.¹¹⁶ The rise of personalism was at a time when Yang studied in Britain and Germany. It grasped Yang's attention immediately. Yang stated,

There are three trends in the recent development of ethics: the first is naturalism (自然主义 *ziran zhuyi*) which holds that human beings act

¹¹¹ Yang Changji, "Extracts" *Wenji*, p. 358

¹¹² For Kant's texts see H. J. Paton's English translation *The Moral Law*, p.91.

¹¹³ Kant's *Groundwork*, chap. II, in Paton's *The Moral Law*, p. 96.

¹¹⁴ See "Respect for persons," *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 8, pp. 283-5.

¹¹⁵ See "Personalism," *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 7, p. 315.

¹¹⁶ See "Personalism," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 5-6, pp.107-9.

mechanically in accordance with the natural law of the cosmos. If this were the case, human life would be purposeless and could not be sufficient to explain moral phenomena. The second is determinism (绝对主义 *jueduizhuyi*), holding that although human action has a purpose, it has been completely preconditioned by God and there is no room for the individual's free will. This concept is not sufficient also to explain moral facts. The third one, personalism (人本主义 *renben zhuyi*), holds that human action and life have a purpose determined by the person's autonomy of will (自由意志 *ziyou yizhi*). The third doctrine represents the latest tendency of Euro-American ethics. [Epistemologically], naturalism is a kind of materialism, determinism, a version of absolute idealism (绝对唯心论 *juedui weixinlun*), and personalism, a personal idealism (人格唯心论 *rengewixinlun*).¹¹⁷

Personalism attached the greatest importance to personality, both in value (person's dignity) and in being (person as substance). Although Kant was not strictly a personalist, Yang believed that Kant's doctrine of the intrinsic and ultimate value of humanity or the value of personality (人格价值 *rengewajia*) in Yang's term was the "foundation of modern ethics" and that "this thought has been further developed by T. Lipps."¹¹⁸

Lipps, who was not included in Yoshida Seichi's *A History of Western ethics*, was primarily a psychologist and then a philosopher. His logic, ethics, aesthetics and epistemology owed most to his background in psychology, of which the theory of empathy (*Einfühlung* lit. in English 'Feeling-into' 移情 *yiqing*) was the most prominent.¹¹⁹ Although his concept of empathy remains a substantial concept today, his ethics are rarely mentioned.¹²⁰ However, Yang considered it to be supplementary to Kant's idea of treating humanity as the end, because he believed that Lipps' arguments for the supreme value of humanity had further elaborated Kant's notion. It is true that Lipps was among those philosophers who made the concept of personality and value central to their worldview and ethics.¹²¹ Yang's introduction of Lipps'

¹¹⁷ Yang Changji, "Lunyu leichao" *Wenji*, p. 82.

¹¹⁸ Yang Changji, "Extracts" *Wenji*, pp. 358.

¹¹⁹ For a brief account of Lipp's thought see "Lipps, Theodor" in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 3-4, pp. 485-6, and also William L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought*, (1980), p. 306.

¹²⁰ For example, *Die ethische Grundfragen* is excluded altogether from his main works by some philosophical dictionaries, for instance, *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and William L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*.

¹²¹ H. Sidgwick *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, (with an additional chapter by A. G. Widgery), (1960), pp. 288-9.

arguments for *Persönlichkeitswert* revealed a significant aspect of Yang's perception of the Kantian notion of taking humanity, or in modern terms, the person, as the end.

Yang's interpretation of Lipps' propositions was a highly condensed account of the first three chapters of his translation of Lipps' *Die ethischen Grundfragen*: 1. Introduction: egoism and altruism, 2. The root ethical motives and evil; and 3. Behaviour and emotion (hedonism and utilitarianism). Lipps' discussion of the value of personality or *Persönlichkeitswert* (人格价值 *renge jiazhi*) derived from his theory of empathy. However, Yang gave no detailed account of the theory. Instead he encapsulated the three chapters in a few points he considered essential for his Chinese readers.

Lipps emphasised the value of personality (人格价值 *renge jiazhi*), while repudiating egoism, hedonism and utilitarianism. He held that, beside egoistic feelings, altruist feelings are present in the root motives of human beings, along with the feeling of self-estimation (*Selbstwertgefühl*, 自己之价值感情 *ziji zhi jiazhi ganqing*) and the sympathetic feeling of the value of personality (*sympathische Persönlichkeitswertgefühl*, 同情之人格价值感情 *tongqing zhi rengejiazhi ganqing*).¹²²

Lipps criticised three kinds of conventional views of egoism including Hobbesian, utilitarian and social Darwinian views, all of which held from different angles that altruism originated from self-interest. Based on his theory of empathy Lipps formulated his argument that sympathy was itself a form of empathy. Accordingly, the emotional model of sympathy was inherent and a priori. When one saw a person suffering, he started to “experience his own inner feelings, (经验自己之感情 *jingyan ziji zhi ganqing*) but did not share the feelings of another (同乎他人之感情 *tong hu taren zhi ganqing*).”¹²³ On this basis, Lipps claimed that “sympathy is independent from and irrelevant to self-interest.” “Because sympathy is not derived from egoism, altruism must have a different source within oneself.” However, at the same time Lipps conceded that “egoism was of prime importance (第一次者 *diyici zhe*) and altruism was secondary (第二次者 *di'erci zhe*).”¹²⁴

¹²² Yang Changji, “Extracts” *Wenji*, pp. 358. Yang attached certain German terms to his Chinese translation of Lipps' *Die ethischen Grundfragen*, but not to his “Extracts.” The German terms I have used in the following account on Yang's perception of Lipps' doctrine of personality are cited from Yang's translation.

¹²³ Yang's translation of Lipps' *Die ethischen Grundfragen*, pp. 6a-b.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 7b and 10b.

This idea was very important for Yang, for it provided him with a weapon to challenge Hobbes' theory of the origins of society and state and to argue that altruism or fellow-feeling was the most basic reason for the organisation of a society or a state. It was on this basis that Yang elaborated his idea of "public-minded individualism (有公共心的个人主义 *you gonggongxin de gerenzhuyi*)."¹²⁵ I shall refer to this point later again in my discussion of Yang's distinction between individualism and egoism and his "public-minded individualism."

Lipps distinguished two kinds of value: personality-value (*Persönlichkeitswert* 人格价值 *renge jiazhi*) and the value of things (*Dingswert* 物之价值 *wu zhi jiazhi*). "The egoists have no intention (or will, 意志 *yizhi*) to seek the existence of the value of personality, instead, their intention is directed only to the existence of the value things. ... Therefore, egoistic feelings are *Dingswertgefühl* or feelings of the value of things. (物之价值感情 *wu zhi jiazhi ganqing*); ... egoistic motives are not directed at achieving humanity (人格 *renge*). [People] feel satisfaction if what they want is gained. That is what we call *Güter* (利 *li*). (Yang put 福利 *fuli*, welfare, in brackets) Welfare (利 *li*) is the value of things. We call the value of personality *das Gute* or good or kindness (善 *shan*). Welfare (利 *li*) is what human beings possess, it cannot be attributed to human nature. Thus the difference is fundamental."

Based on his theory of empathy, Lipps held that "when we talk of 'man,' it does not only mean a physical body which has motion and sound. By 'man' is meant 'personality' (人格 *renge*) that unifies sensation, a sense of representation and desire."¹²⁶ Accordingly, when we perceived the "personality of another" (他人之人格 *taren zhi rene*), what we perceive is "a variety of our personality" (自己人格之变容 *ziji rene zhi bianrong*)¹²⁷ In Lipps, the "personality of the other was the object of the sympathetic sense of the personality-value (*das sympathische Persönlichkeitswertgefühl*, 同情之人格价值感情 *tongqing zhi renejiazhi ganqing*)." And sympathy was the starting point of altruism, therefore, Lipps asserted that "sympathetic sense of the personality-value is identical with the sense of altruism-

¹²⁵ Yang Changji, "Western ethical theories," *Wenji*, pp. 255-7 and "Lecture notes on Education," *Wenji*, pp. 122-5.

¹²⁶ Yang's translation of Lipps' *Die ethischen Grundfragen*, p. 5b.

value (利他之价值感情 *lita zhi jiazhi ganqing*).”¹²⁸ It was from here that Lipps derived his argument for the respect for the self and others. It was in this view that Yang was most interested. Having left out all of Lipps’ detailed psychological account, Yang pointed out directly the notion of respect for self and others.

If one wants to respect for oneself, he must show respect for others. The true nature of a ruler (*Herrennatur*, 君主 *junzhuren*) should be to dislike slavishness in the sense of slavery and enslavement. Those who want to turn others into slaves are people who themselves possess the nature of slavishness (*SKlavennatur*, 奴隶根性 *nuli genxing*).¹²⁹

Yang summed up, “Everyone should have respect for his own personality and the personality of others. If this is so, there will be true equality and freedom. A theory which stresses personality rather than happiness has the dignity of morality (道德之尊严 *daode zhi weiyan*), and therefore, is a just and honourable ethical theory.”¹³⁰

While embracing the Kantian line of thought of man as an end in himself which had been developed further by Lipps, Yang elaborated his view of supreme value of individual person also on the base of his criticism of Boerjiaman’s (Böl(r)germann or Burgermann) view which argued for society as end.¹³¹ Yang stated,

Boerjiaman held that the individual had value only as a slave to society (社会之奴隶 *shehui zhi nuli*) otherwise, the existence of the individual was meaningless. This view of the relationship between individual and society derived from his biological view of the relationship between a cell and an organism (有机体 *youjiti*). The cell took the maintenance of the life of the organism as the purpose of its existence, while the human individual took the maintenance and development of society as the goal of his existence. The cell did not have its own aim [for its own existence], human individuals did the same.¹³²

Yang went on to criticise Boerjiaman for drawing an improper analogy between the two relationships, because there was a substantial difference between the human

¹²⁷ Yang Changji, “Extracts” *Wenji*, p. 359. For detailed account of Lipps’ theory see Yang’s translation of *Die ethischen Grundfragen*, pp. 5b-6b.

¹²⁸ Yang’s translation of *Die ethischen Grundfragen*, pp. 15a-b.

¹²⁹ Yang’s translation of *Die ethischen Grundfragen*, p. 16b and also Yang Changji, “Extracts” *Wenji*, pp. 359

¹³⁰ Yang Changji, “Extracts” *Wenji*, p. 359.

¹³¹ According to *Wenji*’s editorial footnote, “Boerjiaman (1862-?), the alternative translation is Bogeman, a German educator, devoted his whole life to female education.” *Wenji*, p. 134 fn1. The author of this study has consulted all the reference books she could find, but failed to figure out the true identity of Boerjiaman. The possible German names are given in the brackets for reference only.

individual and a cell, that is, the former was a self-conscious being and the latter was not.

A cell has no consciousness, while an individual human being has. Cells compose an organism without the self-consciousness (自觉 *zijue*) of forming an organism, while, on the contrary, an individual is fully aware of himself (自觉 *zijue*) as a member of society. At the same time, he is fully aware of his aim (自己目的 *ziji mudi*) for existing as an independent person (独立之人格 *duli zhi renga*). The relation of a cell to an organism is that of an unconscious individual (个体 *geti*) to the whole (整体 *zhengti*), while the relationship between an individual and society is that of a conscious individual to the whole. This difference is crucial, therefore, the argument of an individual person having no end in himself which draws upon the view of cell having no end in itself is indeed wrong.¹³³

Viewing the self or individual as a self-conscious being is central to Yang's argument that an independent individual with self-consciousness could be truly free and finally morally responsible for one's own actions thus making morality possible.

An individual has self-consciousness, a fact that proves that an individual is able to exist as a being with an independent personality and to take this self as the end. Otherwise, morality would become impossible. Good and evil are both present in society, an individual must take responsibility for his own conducts. Because an individual is an independent person (独立之人格 *duli zhi renga*), he is free to set up his own goal and can act towards this end. If an individual is not an independent person ... he cannot be held responsible for his actions. Moral facts exist, therefore, [we] have to recognise that an individual is an independent person and takes himself as an end. In this light, it is evident that the argument that an individual should be held as a slave to society (社会之奴隶 *shehui zhi nuli*) is incorrect.¹³⁴

Whether Yang's interpretation of Boerjiaman's view is close to its original meaning is beyond the scope of the study here; however, what is important is that Yang's discussion touched upon the key issues of the concept of free will.¹³⁵ Yang apparently took a libertarian stance to assert that an individual or the self was a free and autonomous agent and was morally responsible for his actions and that was why we had to treat the self as an end and were bound to have respect for oneself and

¹³² Yang Changji, "lecture notes on education," *Wenji*, pp. 134-5.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ For the concept of free will and the key issues dividing libertarians and determinists see "Free Will" in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 743-753, and also "Free will and Determinism" in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, vol. 2, pp. 236-242.

others. As a Confucian, Yang was not unaware of autonomous strains of Confucian humanism, but his ideal of the self as a *junzi* had been enriched by Western liberal individualistic elements. Furthermore, Yang began to use this Western knowledge to judge and criticise other Western ideas.

This can also be seen in Yang's discussion of Boerjiaman's idea of the "social mind," which supported the proposition that an individual should be subordinate to society. Yang held that an "abstract idea" was different from a "real substantial existence" (具体的存在 *juti de cunzai*), Boerjiaman, like Plato, confused the two. Yang maintained that an individual's thought or mind was inevitably influenced by his time and milieu. Therefore, the thought or mind of each individual was closely interrelated:

These thoughts or minds have many things in common (共通之点 *gongtong zhi dian*). This generality or commonality was called social spirit (社会精神 *shehui jingshen*) or the thought of the age (时代思想 *shidai sixiang*). However, only an individual's thought or mind (个人之心 *geren zhi xin*) has a real substantial existence, the social mind is only an abstract idea. Scholars in the past have usually inclined to the view that abstract ideas (抽象的概念 *chouxiang de gainian*) had a real substantial existence. Plato is a good example of someone who believed that ideas existing substantially [in the world] were the origin of all beings (万物之根本 *wanwu zhi genben*). Boerjiaman believed that apart from an individual's mind there was a social mind which had a real substantial existence; he had made the same mistake as Plato.¹³⁶

To be sure, the ontological issues such as in what sense were ideas real were not Yang's concern; for him the important point was that the "social mind" could not be a reason for relegating the supreme position of the individual in society. On this basis, Yang asserted explicitly that education should place weight on developing individuality (发达个性 *fada gexing*). Furthermore, the free development of individuality should not be held as a means for achieving the final goal of social development, but as an end only.¹³⁷

Yang held firmly that man should be treated as an end never as a means; he could not tolerate any compromising views, as is evident in his criticism of T. H. Green's

¹³⁶ Yang Changji, "lecture notes on education," *Wenji*, p. 136.

¹³⁷ Yang criticised a kind of social educational theory which, although emphasising promotion of individuality, did not take it as the end. See Yang Changji, "lecture notes on education," *Wenji*, p. 134.

theory of self-realisation. After comparing various Western ethical theories, such as asceticism, hedonism, utilitarianism and evolutionary ethics, Yang inclined towards T. H. Green's ethical thought which, he held, was indeed a "well-balanced teaching," as was mentioned before. However, Yang did not agree completely with Green's views. He criticised Green for minimizing the role of man's subjective initiative in history and for placing man in a subordinate position to society. According to Yang, Green maintained,

The self-consciousness of reality itself (世界之本体 *shijie zhi bentu*) was ultimately spiritual, and this great spirit was eternal, perfect and divine. Every individual mind was an expression of this eternal consciousness. ... This eternal consciousness gradually realised itself in the animal organism of human beings, because of it, the realisation of the ideal would happen in the remote future. ... In this light, ... human beings were in fact nothing but the medium or vehicle (搬运器 *banyun qi*) of this eternal consciousness. The individual self (小我 *xiaowo*) functioned as a tool for the realisation of the Great self (大我 *dawo*). The Great self was an end, while the individual self was the means. This view we cannot agree with. Yet, the world is a great reality (大实在 *da shizai*), and human beings have a real existence. Although human beings are part of the world, they are autonomous living creatures and have their own worth. Although the world exerts tremendous influence on human beings, human efforts can also contribute to the development of the world. Bearing this in mind, the view that the human being's self-development should be directed towards the final goal of social development and that self-realisation is only a means, in fact accords a superior worth to the world and results in human beings being despised.¹³⁸

It became clear that the modern Western idea of the dignity of the individual or the self, at the core of which stood notions such as treating man or the self as an end, and respect for persons were already rooted deeply in Yang's thought. They became essential components of Yang's concept of valuing the self. Yang did not see any conflict between the traditional Confucian view of man as a social being, and the modern Western liberal individualistic view of man as an end. It was true for Yang that an individual's self-realisation could only be completed in the life of a society, however, it was necessary to run counter to the principle of man as the end, because the former was a condition, not a goal.

¹³⁸ Yang Changji, "Various Western ethical theories," *Wenji*, p. 273.

Autonomy of the will and the ethos of the independence of the junzi The term of *junzi* did not disappear from Yang's discourse, Yang used it as a alternative for "individual" or the self. Emphasising the independence of an individual or the self based on autonomous will marked another aspect of Yang's concept of valuing the self. Yang claimed,

By valuing the self I mean that everyone should have his own thought. He holds firmly what he thinks to be right, and even if the whole world opposes it does not care. He resolutely avoids from doing what he believes to be wrong, and even if the whole world is in favour of it he does not seek to pander to it. First, there is independent thought (独立之思想 *duli zhi sixiang*), then there is the independent person (独立之人格 *duli zhi renge*).¹³⁹

Being an independent person, one of Yang's foremost concerns, was presupposed by independent thought, because Yang maintained that "one's conduct is controlled by one's will, and one's will is guided by one's knowledge."¹⁴⁰ Yang believed that man had a special capacity to know moral principles through reason, because "we have eyes and ears, we can investigate things (格物 *gewu*); we have mind and thought, we can study principles exhaustively." As was pointed out in chapters 2 and 3 Yang placed tremendous value on the mind and its function of thought. Under the influence of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism he was convinced that it was an essential element of human nature. Yang's view of man as a rational agent is thus very close to Kant's spirit.

Apart from the idea of the rational agent, the Kantian concept of moral autonomy refers also to the idea that a rational agent is lawgiver to himself. Accordingly, a rational agent is "subject only to his own, yet universal, legislation and that he is bound only to act in accordance with his own will."¹⁴¹ This strain of thought was absorbed into Western ethical theory, and generated an intellectual inclination always to ask whether one ought to follow the conventional opinions and to accept established authority. The distinction between codes of etiquette, fashion, or customs and morality implied that a morally autonomous individual had to be ready at any

¹³⁹ Yang Changji, "To Students," *Wenji*, p. 365.

¹⁴⁰ Yang Changji, "General Discussion on Education," *Study Abroad and Translation*, 9 (Aug. 1903):867.

¹⁴¹ Kant's *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. by J.W. Ellinton, (Indianapolis, IN, 1993), cited from "Autonomy, ethical" in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 1, p.588.

time to oppose the current customs and immoral trends of the day.¹⁴² To be sure, this ethos of autonomy is expressed explicitly in the quotation shown above. The idea that an independent person was not bound by any principles that did not originate in the exercise of reason, or by any source of authority external to reason, was actually a consistent theme running through his lectures and writings of the post-reform movement period.¹⁴³ In Yang, this autonomous spirit was spelled out in the concept of *teliduxing* (特立独行) or “to stand and act independently” which originated in *Liji* [Records of Rituals].¹⁴⁴ In his lectures on self-cultivation, Yang cited Han Yu’s prose “Boyi song” (伯夷颂 Eulogy to Boyi) to illuminate the point to his students.

Han Tuizhi’s ‘Eulogy to Boyi’ says, ‘scholars (士 *shi*) who stand alone and act independently, with the sole purpose of complying with the principle of righteousness (义 *yi*), are men of outstanding ability and integrity (豪杰 *haojie*), men of sincere commitment to the Way (行道笃 *xingdao du*) and of enlightenment resulting from self-knowledge (自知明 *zizhi ming*). There are only a few who can press forward persistently (力行 *lixing*) and be free from doubts (不惑 *buhuo*) despite the objections of the family. There is only one in the whole empire (天下一人而已矣 *tianxia yiren eryiyi*) who can press forward persistently and be free from doubts despite objections of the whole state or prefecture. There is only one in a hundred years or thousand years who can press forward and be free from doubts despite the objections of the whole world (举世非之 *jushi feizhi*). A man like Boyi went so far as to disregard even heaven and earth and the judgement of numberless generations after him in order to do what he thought was right.’¹⁴⁵

Yang summarised up, “Only those people who have strong will can achieve standing and acting independently. Ordinary people have much in common with one another (雷同心 *leitongxing*), but have no independent thought (独立心 *duli xin*). That is why

¹⁴² For this implication of autonomy in Western ethics see Chad Hansen’s “Punishment and Dignity in China,” in *Individualism and Holism*, ed. by Donald J. Munro, (1985), p. 363.

¹⁴³ See Yang Changji, “General Discussion on Education,” *Study Abroad and Translation*, 9 (Aug. 1903):867, and also “Lunyu leichao,” *Wenji*, p. 70.

¹⁴⁴ Thomas Metzger makes a reference to this concept in his work *Escape from predicament* (N.Y., 1977), pp. 40-1.

¹⁴⁵ Yang Changji, “Lunyu leichao,” *Wenji*, p. 70. For the original text of Han Yu see his *Han Changli wenji jiaozhu* [The collated and annotated Anthology of Han Yu] collated and annotated by Ma Qichang and edited by Ma Maoyuan, Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1986, p. 65. For English translation see Liu, Shih Shun, *Chinese Classical Prose: The eight Masters of the T’ang-Sung Period*, Hong Kong, The Chinese University Press, 1979, p. 39. I have made slight modifications. Boyi, the eldest son of the King of the state of Qiongzhu in the late Shang dynasty. After King Wu had overthrown the Shang dynasty, Boyi and his brother died of hunger strike rather than live in a new dynasty. Confucius mentioned *buhuo*, or “free from doubts” three times in the *Analects*. “A man of humanity (*renzhe*) has no fear; a wise man (*zhizhe*) is free from doubts” (9.28 and 14.30) and “states that he had achieved the having no doubts at forty (2.3),” see Legge, pp. 225, 286 and 146.

they are ordinary people.” No doubt, Boyi was an example of someone who had “independent thought” or a kind of insight, which guided one’s decision-making and action. The British were seen by Yang as a representative among the people of Western nations. In his lectures on education Yang wrote,

In the world British are most likely to say ‘no.’ None of the people of the other nations say ‘no’ more than the British do. The British hate to have much in common with one another. If someone has got different views from others, he will not be afraid to express his disapproval. A British person will not allow his ideas to be misinterpreted, and at the same time, is not willing to twist the ideas of others. They would rather to receive honest disapproval than hypocritical praise. ... That is a strong point of the British.¹⁴⁶

Apparently, the independent mind was the core of Yang’s concept of standing and acting independently, and it was viewed by Yang as a capacity for self-determination and as a necessary condition for free action. Like the Western concept of autonomy, Yang’s notion also had other dimensions.¹⁴⁷ The most distinct one was that it was considered in most cases as a personal ideal or personality (人格 *renge*) which involved a set of moral characteristics and traits, for instance, firmness, persistence, toughness, constancy of purpose, strong will, heroic spirit, etc. Yang stated,

Only those who possesses moral integrity (节操 *jiecao*) of independence, and unconventionality and uninhibitedness (独立不羁 *duli buji*) can oppose the current trends of the day and perfect their own nature.¹⁴⁸

The moral integrity of independence, along with unconventionality and uninhibitedness (独立不羁的节操 *duli buji de jiecao*) were necessary for the two fundamental goals of an individual’s life: outwardly, challenging the immoral trends of the day, conventional opinion and accepted social norms; inwardly, nurturing self-cultivation or self-discipline. In other words, this was the meaning of life and the basic content of self-realisation. In this connection, Yang was reminiscent of Rousseau who viewed the modern society or state as a thoroughly corrupted community. Both men shared a similar distrust of contemporary society and government and turned to the individual as a solution. This corrupted society, for Yang, was redeemable and the solution was in the individual’s self-realisation, while,

¹⁴⁶ Yang Changji, “Lecture notes on education,” *Wenji*, p. 125.

¹⁴⁷ See “Autonomy, ethical,” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 1, pp. 288-591.

¹⁴⁸ Yang Changji, “Lunyu leichao,” *Wenji*, p. 71.

for Rousseau, it was so irredeemably corrupt as to require virtual abandonment by the self seeking realisation.¹⁴⁹

Yang's view of the ideal personality can be seen as antithesis of the *xiangyuan* (乡原) or "village honest man" who was condemned by Confucius and Mencius as an "enemy of virtue." Mencius described the "village honest man," saying, "behaves in a manner pleasing to the world. So long as one is good, it is all right. ... He pursues the principle of sharing with others the vulgar practices of the day and, being content with an impure age, appears to be conscientious and faithful, and to show integrity in his conduct." The sort of man of whom you cannot find anything to criticise even if you want to; and "If you want to find fault with him, you cannot find anything either."¹⁵⁰ The basic notion of this concept referred implicitly to the affirmation of the individual's autonomy. Thus heroic spirit and moral courage, such as opposing the current customs, the conventional opinion, established authority and to criticise the morally corrupted world, were designed for the ideal personality of the *junzi*.¹⁵¹

Yang told his students "men of outstanding character and ability" (豪杰 *haojie*) can change the fate of the world (世运 *shiyun*), and cannot be changed by the fate of the world."¹⁵² Lu Xiangshan's spirit of appealing for a breaking through of spiritual shackles was cited by Yang as a footnote to his notion of *teliduxngi*.¹⁵³ For Yang the "men of outstanding character and ability" or heroes were examples of the second level, at the top was the sage. Yang quoted Wang Fuzhi to his students. "It is possible that a man is a hero (豪杰 *haojie*) but not a sage, however, it is impossible that a sage is not a hero."¹⁵⁴ For Yang the most distinguished characteristic of the sage was "holding firm to the Way until death (守死善道 *shousi shandao*)." The sage did not seek to be understood by others, nor had he any fear of slander. He was ready to be not in accord with the current practices of the day and " 'refused ... to be deterred

¹⁴⁹ For Rousseau's assumption see "Self-realisation," *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 8, p. 633.

¹⁵⁰ For "village honest man" see *Analects*, 17.13 in Legge, p.324 and *Mencius*, 7B.34/8-11 in Legge, pp. 499-501 and 7B.37 in D. C. Lau, p. 203. The English translation is mainly D. C. Lau's.

¹⁵¹ See Metzger's discussion of *xiangyuan* (hypocrites) in *Escape from the predicament*, p. 40.

¹⁵² Yang Changji, "Lunyu leichao," *Wenji*, p.72.

¹⁵³ See Mao Zedong's "classroom notes" in *Wengao*, p. 593.

¹⁵⁴ Yang Changji, "Lunyu leichao," *Wenji*, p.69.

though the whole world blamed him.’ The more they are slandered, the more steadfast they will be. This is what is called ‘holding firm to the Way until death.’”¹⁵⁵

Here Yang mixed the Confucian sage with Zhuangzi’s transcendental attitude to life. In *Zhuangzi*, Song Rongzi was one such example, who “refused to be persuaded though the whole world praised him and to be deterred though the whole world blamed him.”¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, “though flood waters pile up to the sky he will not drown. Though a great drought melts metal and stone and scorches the earth and hill, he will not be burned.”¹⁵⁷ The attitude of the *junzi* described in the *Book of Change* was another source for Yang’s concept of *teliduxing*. “To stand tall and have no fear, and to escape from the world and not feel sorrowful.” All of these ideal personalities were involved in the Confucian concept of the will (志 *zhi*).

The significance of the notion of will lay in its impact on Yang’s concept of *teliduxing*, and its relationship were with Kant’s concept of autonomy. There some overlaps between Yang’s concept of the will and Kant’s. Along with the general Western tradition Kant used the term to refer to a genuine decision-making capacity which was seen as the basis of freedom of action. He conceived the will partly as *Wille*, a capacity for autonomous legislation, and partly as *Willkür*, an executive, action generating capacity.¹⁵⁸ As to the value of autonomy and the foundations of ethics, Kant recognised only those moral principles which derived merely from reason and not from natural inclination. In this point Yang disagreed with Kant. Yang stated,

According to Kant, an action carried out from the motive of feelings (感情 *ganqing*) has no moral worth; only those actions which have been done for the sake of duty, which takes conformity with the laws issued by reason as duty and from the duty, have moral worth. This is an unreasonable assumption.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ This referred to Yang’s lecture of self-cultivation on 6 December, see Mao Zedong’s “Classroom notes,” p. 593. For English translation see *Mao’s Road to Power*, p. 27. The first quotation comes from *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1 “Free and easy wandering.” The second quotation refers to *Analects*, book 8, ch. 13.

¹⁵⁶ *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1, p. 5.

¹⁵⁷ Yang Changji, “Lunyu leichao,” *Wenji*, p. 72. For the English translation of *Zhuangzi*, see, Burton Waterson, *Chuang Tzu: Basic writings*, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1961, pp. 27-8.

¹⁵⁸ “Will, the” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 9, p. 721.

¹⁵⁹ Yang Changji, “Various Western ethical theories,” *Wenji*, p. 250.

As a well-versed Confucian Yang based his arguments directly on Mencius' thought on "moral sense" or precisely, "four germinations: the feeling of commiseration, shame and dislike, deference and compliance, and of right and wrong."¹⁶⁰ Yang questioned,

When we see someone have an accident, our feeling of commiseration is aroused and we act immediately to rescue him. How could one say such action has no moral value? It is wrong to hold that it is moral only because the rescue has been done out of a desire to fulfil one's duty.¹⁶¹

Yang also cited the famous German poet F. Schiller (1759-1805)'s argument to refute Kant's idea that reason was the only source of moral laws.¹⁶² Therefore, Yang recognised value of feeling, desire and moral "natural inclinations," asserting,

Feelings and desires are the original driving force. Without them there will be no action. Prohibiting (压抑 *yayī*) and extirpating (殄灭 *tiānmie*) them all results in no activity; furthermore, it removes the desire to live. If people die, their rationality dies with them. This a big contradiction, isn't it? ¹⁶³

On this basis Yang believed in dual origins of moral action.

The concept of will is another example. In Yang's usage and in Chinese tradition's as well, the term *zhi* or will had foremost the meaning of resolved, purpose/intention or determination.¹⁶⁴ "*Zhi* or will is where the mind is going," this basic sense of *zhi* indicated an activity of mind/heart.¹⁶⁵ Decision-making was an aspect of intellectual capacities of mind, was not attributed to functions of the will. "Setting/establishing the will (立志 *lìzhì*)" or "Setting/establishing the will on learning, (志学 *zhìxue*) on humanity (志仁 *zhìrén*) or on the Way (志于道 *zhì yú dào*) were the most popular phrases in the Confucian tradition. In Confucian education, "establishing will" was always the beginning point of curriculum, for instance, Liang Qichao.¹⁶⁶ Yang did

¹⁶⁰ For Mencius's idea see *Mencius*, 2A.6. Cf. Tu Wei-ming, "On the Mencian perception of moral self-cultivation," *Humanity and Self-cultivation*, pp. 64-5.

¹⁶¹ Yang Changji, "Various Western ethical theories" in *Wenji*, p. 250.

¹⁶² Yang wrote, "German poet Schiller believed earnestly Kant's philosophy, however did not agree with Kant in this point. Schiller said, 'we usually associate with our friends out of the feeling of friendship, but according to Kant, this does not accord to morality. What could I do?'" See *Ibid*, p. 251.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 250.

¹⁶⁴ Irene Bloom, "On the matter of the mind" in *Individualism and Holism*, pp. 300-1. She provides a relatively comprehensive account of the concept of will in Chinese and Western thought.

¹⁶⁵ A.C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, (1991) p. 61. Tu Wei-ming's "The value of human" in his *Confucian thought*, pp. 70-1.

¹⁶⁶ Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, p. 82.

the same to start his syllabi of the lecture of self-cultivation with the “establishing the will.” For Yang, the “establishing the will” meant to set up the goal of life which was the starting point for an individual to know where he led his life to go.

“Setting the will on learning” was the first theme in Yang’s lecture, although the term was conventional one, the content was new. Yang read new dimensions into time-honoured Confucian saying, “The Master was wishing Qidiao Kai to enter on official employment. He replied, ‘I am not yet able to rest in the assurance of THIS.’ The Master was pleased.”¹⁶⁷ Qidiao Kai did not take official appointment, because he had not felt ready in knowledge and skills, whereas some people nowadays, who had not got necessary knowledge and sufficient training yet, but were in charge of state affairs. This was like “a quack killing his patient.” Qidiao Kai was a person “who had a huge sense of responsibility.”¹⁶⁸

An individual should have a great ambition or a lofty ideal, namely to take the achievement of humanity as his life-long mission. “His burden is heavy and the road is long, ” therefore, he “must be strong and resolute.”¹⁶⁹ This was the second point Yang made for “establishing the will.” A strong will and a resolute mind were seen as a necessary guarantee for self-government and self-mastering.

Only having a strong will one can foster good habits and build up moral character and integrity in order to achieve a lofty ideal. An individual with strong will, can obtain self-discipline and self-mastering of his desires and conduct; socially, he can withstand the pressure of power and influence (权势 *quanshi*) [from authority or established prescriptions].¹⁷⁰

Sound judgement or insight could not ensure that one’s conducts were always morally right, though it was the precondition of a morally right action. That was because of the will, a practical rationality which played a commanding role in the direction of normative thinking about action and feeling. Yang held that knowledge (认识 *renshi*) and will (意志 *yizhi*) included each other. “When one intends to know a certain object, the mind must be applied, and the attention has to be paid to the

¹⁶⁷ Confucius, *Analects*, 5.5 in Legge, p. 174. I have converted the name from normalisation into pinyin.

¹⁶⁸ Yang Chang, “Lunyu leichao,” *Wenji*, p.67.

¹⁶⁹ Yang cited it from *Analects*, 8.7 for his lectures of self-cultivation. See *Wenji*, p. 70. For English translation see D. C. Lau, *Analects*, p. 93.

object. “Without concentration of attention it is possible to look without seeing and to listen without hearing. ... attention refers to the exercise of the will, therefore, [the process of] knowledge contains the will. Where the mind goes is the capacity of the will.” Because the mind is directed toward a certain goal, the goal itself thus becomes the object of knowledge. Therefore, “[exercise of] the will includes the [application of] knowledge.”¹⁷¹

However, under the influence of Kant, Yang recognised the distinction between the two. He wrote, “Kant distinguished two kinds of knowledge (识见 *shijian*): moral knowledge (道德的识见 *daode de shijian*), that is, what Mencius called the “moral mind of right and wrong” (是非之心 *shifei zhi xin*); and practical knowledge (实行的识见 *shixing de shijian*), regarded as knowledge concerning counsels of prudence in society (处世法 *chushifa*).”¹⁷² Yang seems to be referring here to Kant’s categorical and hypothetical imperatives, both of which were involved in any moral judgement. The former referred to unconditional and universal moral prescription, while the latter to rules or advice of prudence and scales of possibilities.¹⁷³ Yang held that complete action of the will must be supported by a clear and penetrating judgement (明敏之判决力 *mingmin zhi panjueli*), otherwise, even if the action of the will were motivated by good intentions, it would not achieve its end.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, Yang was fully convinced that “acquiring practical knowledge was essential for enhancing and to cultivating the will.”¹⁷⁵ Yang also criticised the inclination in Chinese tradition which emphasised only the importance of proper motivation but overlooked the knowledge of prudence.¹⁷⁶ From the discussion above we can see that Yang held that decision-making was one capacity and function of mind or thought. That is the difference between Yang and Kant. Although thought and will were closely interrelated, they had different emphases, under Kant’s influence, Yang

¹⁷⁰ Yang Chang, “Lunyu leichao,” *Wenji*, p.69.

¹⁷¹ Yang Changji, “Lectures on education” *Wenji*, pp. 136-7.

¹⁷² Yang Changji, “Lectures on education” *Wenji*, p. 174.

¹⁷³ See Kant’s chapter 2 “Passage from popular moral philosophy to a metaphysic of morals” of *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, in Paton’s *The Moral Law*, pp. 78-80. For Paton’s interpretation see, *ibid*, p. 27. See also D. D. Raphael, *Moral Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 29-30.

¹⁷⁴ Yang Changji, “Lectures on education” *Wenji*, p. 174.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*.

viewed the will as a practical rationality and executive, action generating capacity of the mind.

Although Yang criticised Herbart's five ethical ideas on the grounds that they could not be regarded as the source of morality, his perception of the notion of the strong will did draw upon Herbart's ideas of inner freedom and perfection, the first two of Herbart's five moral ideas.¹⁷⁷ Accordingly, Yang taught his students, "inner freedom means harmony between the will and ethical judgement or insight (良心 *liangxin*). And when the intensity of the will is equal to the strength of the ethical judgement, our mind can be said to have reached a state of perfection."¹⁷⁸ In such matters as saving a life or dying for one's country, one's will might be in agreement with the order of saving life issued from the ethical judgement, but might not be in agreement with the order of dying for the country. In this regard, "we cannot say that our mind has achieved a perfect state, for the strength of the will is less than that of the ethical judgement."¹⁷⁹ "Inner freedom and "perfection" were thus accepted by Yang as the ultimate standard for the will. Furthermore, Herbart held that the way to achieve the ideal of the complete harmony between the will and ethical judgement was education and training, and the training of the will was one of the main themes of Herbart's pedagogical methodology. Yang was again fully convinced by Herbart as is evident from the fact that Yang gave extensive coverage to Herbart's methods of training of the will in his lectures on education.

"The Three Armies can be deprived of their commanding officer, but even a common man cannot be deprived of his will (志 *zhi*)."¹⁸⁰ This was the third theme of the chapter of "establishing the will." In this context, the will denoted one's constancy of purpose and commitment to faith. Yang was fully aware of the conflicts between moral principles, and between morality and personal interest. For this reason, he distinguished between personal interest or well-being and personal persuasion, "One can sacrifice his personal interests, but not his own principles (主义

¹⁷⁷ For Yang's criticism see his "Lectures on education" *Wenji*, pp. 111-4.

¹⁷⁸ Yang Changji, "Lunyu leichao" *Wenji*, p. 70. For Yang's detailed account of Herbart's five fundamental ethical ideas see his "Lectures on education," *Wenji*, pp. 111-2.

¹⁷⁹ Yang Changji, "Lectures on education," *Wenji*, p. 112.

¹⁸⁰ Yang cited it from *Analects*, 9.26, in D. C. Lau, p. 99.

zhuyi). By not giving up ism or the principles one is committed to is meant 'One common man cannot be deprived of his will.'"¹⁸¹

Yang here had made his most striking point, "The ethical theories of our country emphasise an individual's independence (个人之独立 *geren zhi duli*)." Confucianism was widely criticised for its overwhelming emphasis on individual's moral and ethical duties in human relations (人伦 *renlun*) which had resulted in the disappearance of the individual as an independent person in the hierarchical net of social relations. The implicit assumption beneath this criticism is that there is an antinomy between the notion of treating an individual as independent person and the Confucian ethical claim of the individual's moral and ethical duties in human relations. These assumptions became the most powerful arguments in the condemnation of Confucianism as the key obstacle to Chinese modernisation. Yang's arguments that Confucianism greatly values individual independence are of fundamental importance.

Generally speaking Yang did not oppose the prescribed Confucian social and ethical norms such as the three basic bonds and the five relationships (三纲五常 *sangang wuchang*). The measure to see whether an individual was an independent person was, according to Yang, whether an individual could "hold firm to the Way until death (守死善道 *shousi shandao*)" or, in another words, have an independent will (志 *zhi*) which could not be deflected in any situation. Yang held that there were numerous examples in Chinese history which could be used to illuminate his point. He stated, that the "historical records and Confucian classics maintain that the first and foremost duty (独立之义务 *diyì zhi yìwù*) of an individual is to 'hold firm to the Way until death'." These moral duties or principles included loyalty, filial piety, chastity, etc. according to Yang. "However, the will of a loyal minister, a filial son, or a chaste woman cannot be deflected by his/her ruler, father and husband. They could sacrifice their lives to serve the ruler, parents and husband, but they must not allowed to be humiliated and despised."¹⁸² To conclude, he quoted Wang Fuzhi,

Wang Chuanshan says, 'because I am a son, I fulfil the duty of filial piety; because I am a minister, I fulfil the duty of loyalty. I do it not to

¹⁸¹ Yang Changji, "Lunyu leichao," *Wenji*, p.70.

¹⁸² Ibid, pp. 70-1

serve rulers and parents, but to carry out principles imposed by myself.¹⁸³

This passage is reminiscent of Kant's two propositions regarding duty. Kant held that an action done "for the sake of duty" and "from a formal principle or maxim – the principle of doing one's duty," had moral worth and could be seen as a morally good one.¹⁸⁴ In other words, "the moral worth of an action does not depend on the result expected from it," but on one's duty.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, both men held that an action motivated by duty and for the purpose of duty was morally good and both men emphasised that the concept of moral duty did not damage the independence of a person, or, in Kant's term, the autonomous will. In other words, only when one regarded himself as subject to the moral law, could independence or autonomy be possible. This became the basis of Yang's argument that "the ethical theories of our country emphasises an individual's independence mostly."

It should be noted that Yang was fully aware of the crucial practice in Chinese history that had resulted from the moral laws of Three Cardinal Guides and Five Constant Virtues. As discussed in chapter 8, Yang did attack on the certain key ideas of traditional Confucian ethics such as "filial piety" and "chastity" in terms of humanism. However, what Yang criticised was not actions carried out from moral principle and motivated by moral principle but the customs practised in the name of these social norms. He held that it was absolutely wrong only to emphasise the duties of ministers, sons and wives and this was the crux of the problem. Therefore, Yang asserted, "a *junzi*'s teaching should require a father to be benevolent, a son to be filial. Furthermore, elders and betters should respect autonomous will (自由之意志 *ziyou zhi yizhi*) and independent personalities (独立之人格 *duli zhi renge*) of younger and the inferior people."¹⁸⁶

We discussed above Yang's concept of *teliduxing*, a cardinal component of his idea of valuing the self. The notion of *teliduxing* was defined and related in differing ways. Independent thought (独立思想 *duli sixiang*) was viewed as the basis, however,

¹⁸³ Ibid, p.71.

¹⁸⁴ Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, in Paton's *The Moral Law*, pp. 63-5, and also Paton's interpretation, see *ibid*, pp. 19-21.

¹⁸⁵ Kant proposed three propositions regarding duty, the third one reads, "Duty is the necessity to act out of reverence for the law." Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, p. 66.

without will the ideal of an autonomous agent was in vain. Although Yang's notion of the will drew largely upon the Confucian tradition, it also absorbed new Western elements. A strong will could be obtained through education and training. *Teliduxing* was also viewed by Yang as the attribute of an ideal personality involving moral courage, heroism and a spirit of social rebellion. Personality was favourably judged on the basis of human dignity and of belief in man as an autonomous agent in thought, will and conduct. Yang did not become involved in the certain fundamental theoretical issues regarding an individual's autonomy, such as freedom and necessity. Furthermore, the notion of freedom, which was at the core of Kant's ethics, was mentioned less frequently than "independence." This indicates the different emphasis in Yang's *teliduxing* and Kant's autonomy. Fulfilling one's moral duty or viewing an individual as subject to moral law was seen by Yang as an essential precondition for an individual's authentic independence. In this regard, Yang's notion of *teliduxing* bore a resemblance to Kantian ethics.

Public-minded Individualism As shown above, Yang's idea of valuing the self was to an extent a kind of individualism, although Yang never called his principle individualism. In his 1914 lecture on education Yang elaborated his idea of "public-minded individualism" which, along with other individualistic elements we have discussed above, formed the theoretical basis of Yang's principle of valuing the self.

Yang set forth the idea of public-minded individualism through distinguishing individualism from selfish egoism. Yang held that an individual with independent thought and personality was the foundation of a powerful nation; at the same time he was aware of a potential threat to social solidarity of an advocacy of individualism.

An individualist (个人主义之人 *gerenzhuy zhi ren*) usually has an imperious manner: self-confident and self-assertive, he does not easily get along with others. When he is not in agreement with the opinions of others, he will stand alone and act independently. If a society has too many such individualists, the national and social solidarity must be weakened, and a nation will eventually fall apart.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Yang Changji, "Lunyu leichao," *Wenji*, p.71.

¹⁸⁷ Yang Changji, "Lecture notes on education," *Wenji*, p.124.

In this light Yang warned, “education must aim to nurture individualistic men, and at the same time guard against the disadvantages of individualism.”¹⁸⁸ Yang believed that individualism was able to stand on a firm ground if it differentiated itself from egoism. Yang asserted,

There are individualists who don’t care about social well being, as shown above, however, individualism is totally different from egoism. Sometimes, individualists may not be concerned with social welfare, this is because that they do not want to lose their independent spirit (自我精神 *ziwo jingshen*). They show no consideration not only for social interest, but also for their own lives. They are ready to die for the faith they have committed to. Therefore, you can find nothing to blame this spirit of individualists.¹⁸⁹

Here Yang showed his definite approval of individualism and individualist conduct regardless of what kind of result might result. So long as these actions had been carried out from a commitment to a lofty ideal, they were good. Therefore, Yang held that the difference between individualism and egoism lay in motivation, purpose and results.

Egoists do not care and [sometimes] even injure social interests. Individualists may do the same things, but they are driven by totally different motivations. The former is motivated purely by gaining personal benefit, the latter by defending individualist principles. The egoists regard [personal] properties and lives as primarily important, while individualists often act without consideration of the cost to [their own] lives and properties. This is that egoists cannot imagine. In terms of results, because sometimes both are similar, people have thought that they are identical. Nevertheless, from the point of view of motive, they are completely different.¹⁹⁰

Egoism was characterized by self-interest (利己心 *lijixin*), while individualism was governed by autonomy (有主张 *you zhuzhang*). On this basis Yang came to reconcile individualism with the public spirit or mind (公共心 *gonggongxin*).

The public mind is an opposing concept to self-interest. If we identify the individualism with egoism, it is impossible to cultivate a public mind and self-interest. However, individualism and egoism are different in kind, moreover, the sacrifice of personal benefit for society is not incompatible with existing as an independent self (维持自我 *weichi*

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 124-5.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 125.

ziwo). Therefore, it is possible to unify the cultivation of public mind and that of the autonomous spirit.¹⁹¹

Having distinguished individualism from egoism, Yang felt free to affirm the value of individualism and declare his principle: “He who is able to act as an autonomous being is he who can become a person of sincere thought and feeling and strong will. Achieving a powerful nation can only be the end result of the presence of such persons. However, this must be backed by public-minded individualism.”¹⁹² It should be noted here that public-mindedness did not mean losing one’s independent status but rather a readiness to sacrifice one’s personal benefit and even one’s life to society for the purpose of maintaining the principles or ideals to which one was committed. At the bottom of the heart what Yang intended to affirm and to emphasise was individualism rather than other principle. This view marked Yang’s principle of valuing the self.

Economic independence To be sure, the emphasis of independent thought and autonomous will is the core of Yang’s idea of valuing the self; however, Yang did not confine himself at the theoretical and ideal level. His realistic temperament led him to address the question of whether an individual who was unable to live on his own feet could be really regarded as an autonomous agent. Furthermore, if everyone in society was an economically independent person how could a nation not be wealthy and powerful? These two concerns became the starting point of Yang’s article “Zhi sheng pian” (On managing the lives) which was published in *New Youth* at the turn of 1917.¹⁹³ The Confucian “principle for the production of wealth”, that is, for the number of producers to be greater than that of consumers, became one of the most important starting point for Yang to argue for an individual’s independence.¹⁹⁴ As discussed above, Yang viewed the self or the individual as the centre of social relationships; therefore, when he called for the independence of an individual, his arguments inevitably referred to the social system in which an individual lived.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid, p. 126.

¹⁹³ According to his diary, Yang wrote the draft of this article in the late spring of 1915, see his *Riji*, entry of 17 April 1915, p. 174. The article was first published in *New Youth*, 2.4 (December 1916):353-360; 2.5 (January 1917):451-458, and is reprinted in *Wenji*, pp. 229-246.

¹⁹⁴ For the Confucian saying see *The Great Learning*, 10.19 in Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 94. The entire section reads “There is a great principle for the production of wealth. If there are many

Criticism of the Chinese traditional family system and social system was thus an underlying theme running through the article. His arguments relating to the autonomous self or individual can be summarised in eight points.

First, Yang held that the younger generation should not depend upon the elder generation. In comparison of the customs of inheritance in China and Britain, Yang stated that in China the inheritance was divided equally and then passed to every son, while in Britain the primogeniture was given preference. One might say that the Chinese system was fairer than the British one, however, the latter had facilitated a sense of independence amongst the other sons, providing a powerful impulse for these sons to go abroad in order to live on their own feet: this has been the reason for the “success of British colonisation.”¹⁹⁵ Yang asserted, “ ‘God helps those who help themselves.’ This is a motto of a British educator. If everyone has a independent spirit, it then forms a force of an independent nation.” As to the Confucian principles of kindness (仁慈 *renci*) and righteousness (义 *yi*) Yang argued, “the greatest evil (不慈 *buci*) for a father is not to educate his sons to live on their own feet, and the greatest unrighteousness for a father is to foster up a dependent mind in his sons. Once these people cannot depend upon their fathers or elder brothers, they must depend upon others. This is worse than unrighteous, and is shameless. A man of humanity cannot bear it.”¹⁹⁶

Yang’s second argument was that fathers should not depend on their children. This point challenged directly the time-honoured Chinese view that “having sons guarantees security in old age” (养儿防老 *yang'er fanglao*). Yang argued, “In the past our people had no idea of state (国家观念 *guojia guannian*), therefore, they viewed sons as their private property (私有财产 *siyou caichan*). ... Having sons for the purpose of benefiting the self only is not a noble idea (高尚之思想 *gaoshang zhi sixiang*). Although my son is my son at the same time he is also a citizen of the state (国之民 *guo zhi min*). Therefore, bearing and bring up a son is not only for the self-interest, but also for training a citizen.”¹⁹⁷ Like many late Qing intellectuals, Yang

producers and few consumers, and if people who produce wealth do so quickly and those who spend it do so slowly, then wealth will always be sufficient.”

¹⁹⁵ Yang Changji, “Zhi sheng pian” *Wenji*, p. 229.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., pp.229-230.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 230-1.

believed that the concept of citizenship played a pivotal role in the successful internal organization of Western societies, and should therefore be adopted and encouraged.¹⁹⁸ For Yang, the concept of citizenship was perfectly compatible with traditional Confucians view of the moral autonomy of the *junzi*. Therefore, it became a new source of authority by which to judge the traditional Chinese social customs. On this basis, Yang introduced the British social security system, and particularly, savings and pensions to his Chinese reader.¹⁹⁹

Thirdly, the mind of being dependent on brothers was also refuted by Yang, for it ran counter to the Confucian principle of having more producers than consumers and the principle of being a independent person.

An individual's independence was decided by whether he/she could manage to be economically independent. This principle should be applied not only to males, but also females. Yang was clearly aware of it. Based on the view of equality, girls and women's independence were also included in Yang's concern. The vocation (天职 *tianzhi*) of a housewife was to manage the family's livelihood efficiently and properly. The lives of Western women became model examples. Yang wrote, "In Western countries, there are women who have never married, and society also provides various jobs and professions properly for women. Recently, vocation school for women have started to emerge. Some women live on knitting socks, and tailoring become more popular. All of this indicates social progress." Women taking a profession was regarded by Yang as a kind of social progress, therefore, on the one hand, Yang encouraged women to go to society and to get a job or profession, so that they need marry but live on her own earning; on the other hand, Yang held that society also had a responsibility to provide employment opportunities for women.

The rapidly increasing population would cause poverty which would affect an individual's economical independence directly. Taking this into account, Yang stated his fifth and sixth arguments: Do not marry when you are young, if you had not yet lived on your own feet; do not take a concubine. Yang wrote, "According to an

¹⁹⁸ For the concept of citizenship in China, see the recently published essay collection *Imagining the people: Chinese intellectuals and the concept of citizenship, 1890-1920*, edited by Joshua A. Fogel and Peter G. Zarrow, USA: E.M. Sharpe, Inc. 1997. For the reference I made here see pp. 4-5.

economist, the world population is increasing in a geometric progression (几何级数 *jihejishu*), while food and the consumption of products are increasing in an arithmetic progression (算术级数 *suanshujishu*). In an overpopulated world, unemployment would grow in number and the struggle for survival would become fiercer and fiercer, so that war, famine, flooding and draught would become the way to check population growth. This is really a sorrow shared by all people in the world. There are two ways to minimise this suffering. A positive way is to develop the production, the passive one is to control population.”²⁰⁰ To be sure, what Yang talked refers to the theory of T. R. Malthus (1766-1834), an English economist. Yang probably is one of the earliest Chinese to pay attention to Malthusianism.²⁰¹

Concubinage was not only an ethical issue, but there were also economical reasons to oppose it. Yang held, “Concubinage leads to a numerical growth of consumers, therefore, we have to pay attention to it.”²⁰² From an ethical perspective, Yang’s criticism of concubinage was based on his humanistic and liberal individualist values. Yang held that concubinage was a mixture of polygamy and of slavery, which ran counter to the principle of equality and of respect for the person.²⁰³ “My arguments will shock the Chinese public,” he wrote, “however, prohibition of early marriage and concubinage have the utmost importance for development of society and economics, I must express it in order to bring it to public attention.”²⁰⁴

Opposing the domestic servant system was the seventh point proposed by Yang. “Domestic servants are also citizens,” Yang argued, “When one more servant is kept privately in a home, the state will get one less independent citizen. If you want to know the strength of a state, simply look at the number of servants in the state.”²⁰⁵ According to his personal observation Yang held that the “number of servants in a Japanese or Western family of middle and up class was less than that in a Chinese

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 242-3. In his article “Yu guiguohou duiyu jiaoyu zhi ganxian”, Yang also referred to teacher’s savings and pensions in Britain. See *Wenji*, pp. 64-5.

²⁰⁰ Yang Changji, “Zhisheng pian,” *Wenji*, pp. 232-3.

²⁰¹ In 1950s when Ma Yinchu (1882-1982), a graduate with PhD degree in economics of Columbia University in 1915, raised the issue of population problem in his work *Xin renkoulun* [New interpretation of theory of population], he was classified as a rightist and was criticised for advocacy of Malthusianism.

²⁰² Yang Changji, “Zhisheng pian,” *Wenji*, p. 233.

²⁰³ For detailed discussion see chapter 8 of this study.

²⁰⁴ Yang Changji, “Zhisheng pian,” *Wenji*, p. 233.

family.” Furthermore, “keeping a servant” was essentially in opposition to the principle of respect for persons.

Finally, choosing one’s career was also important for an individual’s independence. One could not live on two careers, Yang thought, such as: taking up an official appointment (为官 *weiguan*) and joining the army (当兵 *dang bing*). “Being a government official can only be for the purpose of fulfilment of duty, not for [seeking] power and profit.”²⁰⁶ When one takes up an official appointment with the purpose of making a living, he will lose his honesty and righteousness. There were even worse cases of people holding office for profit. All of these were the root cause of a corrupted government.

Yang’s objection to joining the army as a way of making living was a response to the fate of the Xiang army, which was disbanded by government after the suppression of Taiping Rebellion. Numerous ex-soldiers became vagrants, some of them even becoming bandits. It brought about serious social problem to Hunan. Taking German and Japanese compulsory military service as an example, Yang held that “joining the military service should be out of fulfilment of duty only.”²⁰⁷

As shown above, Yang rested his idea of valuing the self not only on a theoretical level, but also in a practical, and this realistic and practical, tendency in his thought as is evident in his second principles: comprehending the present

Comprehending the present Reality

As we have mentioned at the beginning of the discussion of Yang’s two principles, Yang held that ceaseless motion was the most essential attribute of the universe.²⁰⁸ Of course, it was nothing new, because both Confucians and Daoists, were convinced by the cosmology of *yin-yang* motion, by which, the myriad things were generated. However, Yang’s view of the attribute of “ceaseless motion” was no longer confined

²⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 234.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 235.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 235-6.

²⁰⁸ For Yang’s view of the universe see also his lectures on *Analects*, in which Yang selected the paragraph, “The Master standing by a river, said, ‘It passes on just like this, not ceasing day or night!’” (*Analects*, 9.16) and used Zhu Xi and Cheng Yi’s interpretation to point out that the ceaseless transformation of Heaven and Earth was the “original nature of the Way,” (Zhu Xi) “ceaseless heavenly movement was the substance of the Way.” (Cheng Yi) They denoted “the nature of progress of the whole universe.” See *Wenji*, pp. 84-5.

in cyclic and oscillatory one, under the influence of Darwinian evolutionary theory, it drew upon the view that world moved in a linear and progressive way. Yang wrote, “today’s world evolved out of the ancient world, and the future world will evolve out of the present world.” And then Yang asserted, “because today is better than the past, the future should be better than today.”²⁰⁹ This view had a ring of the Hegelian dialectic principle of “negation of negation.” Today was a negation of yesterday; tomorrow was a negation of today. So where was the foothold for an individual in an ever-changing world? And what was the present? These were the crucial and pressing questions Yang had to answer, because they referred to the issue of existence of the self or an individual and the meaning of it.

Yang held that “In all generation there is one span of my life; and in one hundred years there is one present.”²¹⁰ What does Yang mean by this? The young Mao Zedong’s arguments can be used here as a footnote to his teacher’s ideas. Mao held, “The past and future of time are arbitrary divisions that human beings make in the present, but in reality time is one indivisible span. And thus our life within the single span of time is all real.” Furthermore, “in terms of time, we see only past and future; we do not even see that there is a present. Realisation does not refer to this; it refers rather to the spiritual and physical experiences that I bring together in the course of my life in the universe, and which I must make every effort to actualize.”²¹¹ Therefore, the present meant the span of one’s life, it was real; and the whole meaning of this existence was in self-realisation. An individual seized the present minute, hour and day of his life to order to actualise himself as a self-conscious and morally autonomous subject as the essential meaning of this self-realisation. On this basis Yang regarded comprehending the present as a reality in which an individual could actualise the self. On the other hand, without the self, there would be no subject of action, comprehending the present would be empty talk. Therefore, Yang stated, “by the ‘there is not one things all in the vast landscape I can rely upon except for myself’ I mean seeking within oneself and depending on the self; by the ‘there is nothing I can hold onto except for the immediate present (目前 *muqian*)’ I mean

²⁰⁹ Yang Changji, “Jiaoyu fanlun,” in *Youxueyibian*, 9(August 1903):869.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

emphasising action now and here (现在之力行 *xianzai zhi lixing*).” The meaning of the two ideas had to “be explained by each other.”²¹² The mutual containment and correlation was the first implication of the idea of comprehending the present emphasised by Yang.

“Profound thinking” (深思 *shensi*) was emphasised in Yang’s concept *tong* (通) or “comprehending” which was not a pure epistemological concept but used particularly in the study regarding moral metaphysics and “learning to be a sage.” This usage had deep roots in Confucian tradition. Yang wrote, “Thinking is the sage’s effort. A sage can penetrate all and the ‘the ability to penetrate all comes from the ability to penetrate subtlety, and the ability to penetrate subtlety comes from thinking’.” This idea was inspired by Zhou Dunyi’s *Tongshu* [Penetrating the *Book of Changes*], chapter 9 “Thought.”²¹³ On this basis Yang divided knowledge into two categories: philological learning and philosophical inquiry. Associated with Chinese scholarship, Yang held,

Han learning penetrated what is manifested (通显 *tong xian*), while Song learning or Song Neo-Confucianism penetrated what is subtle (通微 *tong wei*); Gu Tinglin (namely Gu Yanwu) penetrated what is manifested, while Wang Chuanshan (namely Wang Fuzhi) penetrated what is subtle. Penetrating what is manifested results from comprehensive learning, while penetrating the subtlety results from profound thought. Profoundity enables one to explore the things and affairs thoroughly and discern the incipience and subtlety of myriad things and affairs (万事微芒之几 *wanshi weimang zhi ji*). Erudition enables one to handle ever-changing situations without limits.²¹⁴

For Yang the scholarship of textual criticism required broad knowledge and the study of moral principle and universal truth required philosophical meditation. As for its importance, Yang held, “Although neither learning and thinking should be overemphasized at the expense of each other, thinking is particularly important.”²¹⁵

²¹¹ Mao Zedong, “Lunlixue yuanli pizhu” (Marginal Notes to: Friedrich Paulsen, *A System of Ethics*), in *Mao wengao*, pp. 202, 203-4. (Hereafter, “Marginal Notes”). For English translation see *Mao’s Road to Power*, vol. 1, pp. 251, 252.

²¹² Yang Changji, “Gao xuesheng,” *Wenji*, p. 365.

²¹³ For English translation see Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book*, p. 469.

²¹⁴ Yang Changji, “Dahuazhai riji” in *Youxue yibian*, 8(May 1903):41. *Ji* (几) is an ambiguous and formidable term which originated in the *Book of Change*, and became prominent in Zhou Duiyi’s philosophy. It refers to the subtle state of an incipient activating mind which, Zhou believed, gave rise to good and evil. See *Tongshu*, chapter 3 and 4. For a modern study see Bounghown Kim, “A study of Chou Tun-i’s (1017-1073), (PhD dissertation) The university of Arizona, 1996, esp. pp. 229-241.

²¹⁵ Yang Changji, “Dahuazhai riji,” *Youxue yibian*, 8(May 1903):40-1.

However, in the article “To the Student” where he re-claimed his “two great principles,” the content of learning was largely expanded, and general knowledge learning was given the same importance as “profound thought.”²¹⁶ Knowledge provided material for thinking. Both presupposed how one could obtain insight into the present. Not a single one of these conditions could be dispensed with, in order to achieve an impartial insight in terms of not praising the past to condemn the present and not praising the present to condemn the past. It was important to know what should we change and what should we adapt from the past. Therefore, both knowledge and profound thought were essential.

Calling for attention to be paid to the present and pressing problems regarding China and human life characterised another important aspect of “comprehending the present.” “If we study history,” Yang told his students, “we have to emphasise modern history, because it is closely related to us.”²¹⁷ Furthermore, the current situation, problems and new development of the world were reflected largely in newspapers, journals and recently published books. Reading them was regarded by Yang as an important way of achieving comprehension of the present. At the same time, Yang criticised particularly the tendency of blindly following the ancient laws and adhering to old practices.

According to Yang’s own explanation shown above, “action now and here” was at the core of “comprehending the present.” Yang’s view of strenuous action (力行 *lixing*) had undergone some changes since 1903 when the two principles were still in their embryonic form. When Yang provided his first formulation, strenuous action was as important as “profound thought,” and “action” or “practice” was seen as the matter referring to the physical aspect, while “profound thought” referred to intellectual and spiritual scope.²¹⁸ However, in the final version, Yang held that knowledge and practice were two aspects of action (活动 *huodong*).²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Yang Changji, “Gao xuesheng,” *Wenji*, p. 365.

²¹⁷ Mao Zedong, “Classroom Notes”, in *Mao Wengao*, p. 601. For English translation see *Mao’s Road to Power*, vol. 1, p. 39.

²¹⁸ In the “Dahuaizhai riji” published in 1903 Yang wrote, “I have benefited a lot from two things, one is strenuous practice (力行 *lixing*), the other is profound thinking.” See *Wenji*, p. 24.

²¹⁹ Yang Changji, “Gao xuesheng,” *Wenji*, p. 365.

Self-enlightenment (自觉 *zijue*) and practice (实行 *shixing*) were two aspects of action. When applied and manifested in perception and mentality, it is called self-enlightenment; when applied and manifested in the physical body, it is called practice. If we acquire knowledge and put it into practice now (即知即行 *jizhi jixing*), and unify knowledge and action (知行合一 *zhixing heyi*), then we can say that we have achieved self-enlightenment.²²⁰

The distinction between knowledge and action was written off and the unifying of knowledge and action was advocated. By identifying knowledge with action, Yang set forth the point in the case of freedom of thought and action,

Freedom of thought must be followed by freedom of speech, freedom of speech must be followed by freedom of action. Without freedom of speech and action, freedom of thought cannot be completed.²²¹

From the example of the relationship between freedom of thought and freedom of action, including freedom of speech, Yang moved on to discuss the general issue of the relationship between knowledge and action (知行 *zhixing*), and words and action (言行 *yenxing*).

What man knows must be carried out, without action knowledge is wasted; what man says must be carried out, without action words are only empty talk. Self-enlightenment cannot be separated from strenuous action, without action self-enlightenment cannot be accomplished. Therefore, action is honoured.²²²

From the above it is clear that Yang thought of knowledge and action as interdependent, mutually involved and conditioned. Yang laid equal importance on both. However when Yang referred to broad learning, profound thinking and action, his stress started to lapse onto the side of action.

Of broad learning, profound thinking and strenuous action, one should be overemphasized at the expense of the others. Broad learning and profound thinking are that which guide energetic action, however, action is particularly crucial. Action is the end, while broad learning and profound thinking are the means. If one does not put his broad knowledge in application, of what value is broad learning? If one does not put his profound thought in application, of what value is profound thought? In strenuous action, broad learning and profound thought function as the application of strenuous action; without strenuous action, broad learning and profound thought result in futile effort. Furthermore, broad learning and profound thinking are kinds of strenuous action. For one who cannot take strenuous action his knowledge will not be

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

broadened and his thought will not be deepened. Therefore, students must emphasise practice.²²³

Again, knowledge was identified with action, moreover, the strenuous action was elevated in the position of substance (体 *ti*) and the final end, and knowledge, became its application (用 *yong*) and was subject to this end. This version of theory of knowledge and action has deep roots in the Confucian tradition from Confucius, through Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi to Wang Yangming's doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action.²²⁴ There are some similarities between Yang and his forefathers Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming. For instance, Zhu Xi said, "Knowledge and action always require each other. ... With respect to order, knowledge comes first, and, with respect to importance, action is more important." Moreover, "The efforts of both knowledge and action must be exerted to the utmost. As one knows more clearly, he acts more earnestly, and, as he acts more earnestly, he knows more clearly."²²⁵ Wang Yangming said, "Knowledge is the crystallization of the will to act, and action is the task of carrying out that knowledge; knowledge is the beginning of action, and action is the completion of knowledge."²²⁶ Another modern example was Sun Yat-sen. Although he turned the ancient doctrine around and said, "it is difficult to know but easy to act," he was an adherent of this long tradition of emphasising action and the man of action.²²⁷

In summary, Yang's concept of valuing the self has three dimensions: metaphysics, ethics and life philosophy. In the metaphysical dimension, Yang's idea of the self was inspired by many sources, including the concept of *cheng* which originated from Confucian ethical metaphysics and then adopted Western scientific elements to the cornerstone for his self-centred rather than anthropological view of the individual. Because the self and the universe shared the same *qi*, unity with Heaven was possible. Because man was the only species in the universe with intelligence, he deserved an ultimate noble position and to be respected. The self consisted of two

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Chan Wing-tsit, "Chinese theory and practice, with special reference to humanism," *The Chinese Mind* ed. by Charles, A Moore, (1967), pp. 14-5.

²²⁵ *Zhuzi quanji*, [Complete Works of Zhu Xi], III.8a-b, cited in *ibid.* p. 15.

²²⁶ Wang Yangming, *Chuanxi lu* [Records of Instructions for Practical Living], sec. 5, cited in *ibid.*

²²⁷ Chan Wing-tsit, "Chinese theory and practice, with special reference to humanism," *The Chinese Mind* ed. by Charles, A Moore, (1967), p. 15.

parts: the small part and the great part, only those who could transcend the egoistic self could really establish the self. Yang's idea of an universal "great self" drew not only from Zhang Zai's enlarging mind and the Taoist Shao Yong, but also Schleiermacher. The self was the foundation and the starting point.

In the ethical aspect, Yang adopted the Kantian concept of respect for persons and man's existence as the end in himself never as a means. Yang even criticised T.H. Green's view of self-realisation for not providing strong enough arguments for treating man as the end. The idea of humanity and human dignity provided the ultimate measure for Yang to question traditional social norms and customs.

A particular emphasis on an individual's autonomy characterises Yang's thought. For Yang, the mind had a capacity for consciousness, perception, and reason which enables one to discover and grasp the truth about duty and good without external guidance, while the will provided a guarantee for one's conduct being in accordance with moral principles and laws issued by the mind. The sense of resolve, purpose, and determination was emphasised in Yang and all Confucians' usage of will, while the sense of giving moral laws and practical reasons for action was the dominant meaning of the Kantian will. Viewing the self as a unity of mind and a strong will, instead of autonomous will, did not affect, in the slightest amount, Yang's embrace of the Kantian idea of autonomy in which the self or an individual was regarded as an autonomous and rational agent who was bound only by self-given laws. Herbart's well-known five ethical ideas became one of the most important sources for Yang's view of the strong will, which was crucial for the achievement of the self-independence. However training in order to anneal the will was necessarily required. In contrast to Kant who held that morality should be desire-independent principles, Yang regarded desire as the original driving force of moral action. An individual's authentic freedom was at the centre of Kant's concern with individual's autonomy, it was formulated in the form of the independence of a person in Yang's idea of valuing the self.

Corollary, *teliduxing*, a time-honoured Confucian ideal of the *junzi*, was advocated by Yang as the core of ideal of an independent personality involved in moral integrity and heroic spirit. "An individual with a strong will, can obtain self-

discipline and self-mastering of his desires and conducts; socially, he can withstand the pressure of power and influence (权势 *quanshi*) [from authority or established prescriptions].” Drawing upon the distinct Confucian ethos of “Holding firm to the Way until death (守死善道 *shousi shandao*)” Yang proclaimed his principle: One could sacrifice his life, but never his principles and faith. A more distinct aspect of Yang’s view of an individual’s independence from the Western version of personal autonomy was his emphasis on person’s economical independence.

Through distinguishing egoism from individualism Yang believed individualism stood on a firm basis. Furthermore Yang proposed a public-minded individualism in order to overcome the shortcoming of egoistic individualism. Therefore, from the implications of the characteristics of Yang’s thought shown above and its explication as Yang spoke out directly and openly, it is not far-fetched to say that Yang’s idea of valuing the self is a kind of individualism.

Yang did not approve of man as a giant in thought and a dwarf in action. His realistic outlook led him to emphasis action here and now overwhelmingly. This was a call for paying attention to and exploring the present and pressing problem regarding China and human life and for strenuous action (力行 *lixing*). In knowledge, profound thought was primary and broad learning was secondary; in relationship between knowledge and action, action was the substance and knowledge its application. Like his Confucian forerunners, Yang identified knowledge with action and this version of unity of knowledge and action enabled him to elevate the strenuous action to an end position. Self-realisation in the sense of the development of an individual’s physical and spiritual capabilities to the utmost was the goal and the whole meaning of life, however, this self-realisation could not be separated from strenuous action.

Nevertheless, the influence of the Confucian ideal of *junzi* – inner commitment to the sagehood or humanity and outer commitment to this-worldly activism and participation in society - is powerfully at work in the entire background of Yang’s two principles. For a Confucian, the basic concern is the social life here and now. Yang’s two principles show unmistakably a Confucian humanistic concern with the goal, meaning and conduct of life.

Conclusion

Yang Changji's "To students" was published in January 1919 several months before the May Fourth incident, suggesting that he had have a premonition of the imminent storm about to break out among China's students and intellectuals. His "Xiyang lunlixue shi zhi zhailu" 西洋伦理学史之摘录 [Extracts from my translations of *A history of Western ethics*], published on May 1919 in *Minduo*, a special issue entitled "Xiandai sichao hao."¹ These two were last publications before Yang's death. We don't know Yang's response to the May Fourth incident, however, they contain many of the ideas that were to dominate the thinking of the May Fourth movement, such as individual's freedom, duty and right. What we know is that he was ill shortly afterwards and spent the whole summer and autumn in a sanatorium in the Western suburb of Beijing and never returned his beloved lecture room. He died on 17 January 1920 in a German hospital in Beijing at age of fifty. It was said that he recited his favourite poems and fought for life right up to the last minutes.² The funeral was held on 25 January and the obituary, signed by Cai Yuanpei, Fan Yuanlian, Yang Du, Hu Yuantan, Li Jingxi and Mao Zedong, was published on 22 January 1920 *Beijing daxue rikan* [Peking University Daily].³ His friends and students published articles of recollections and mourning in newspapers and magazines in Hunan and Beijing.⁴

Yang advocated an intellectual-educational approach and maintained "influencing and transforming young students, and sowing the seeds among them through education."⁵ The seeds of his thought and philosophy eventually bore fruit among his students as can be seen from the establishment of Xinmin xuehui (新民学会), or "New

¹ It was first published in *Minduo* 民铎 [People's Bell] (Shanghai), 6 (15 May 1919).

² Li Xiaodan, "Yang Huaizhong xiansheng yishi" (Anecdotes of Mr Yang Huaizhong), see *Wenji*, p. 379.

³ "Qishi" (An Obituary notice Mourning Mr. Yang Changji), *Beijing University Daily*, no 521, 22 January 1920, reprinted in *Wenji*, p. 372. For the English translation see *Mao's Road to Power*, vol. 1, pp.487-9.

⁴ Zhang Pingzi, chief-in-editor of *Dagong bao* (Hunan) published a poem and Shu Xincheng, published an article in *Hunan journal of education*. In March, a mourning service was held in Hunan. See Wang Xingguo, *Yang Changji de shengping ji sixiang*, pp. 191-2.

⁵ Yang Changji, "Zhi jiaoyu zhongzhang Fan Yuanlian shu" (A letter to Fan Yuanlian, Minister of Education), 1917, in *Wenji*, p. 344. Fan Yuanlian (1876-1928), a native of Hunan, and one of the first group of Hunanese studying in Japan.

Citizen Study Society,” on April 1918 at the home of Cai Hesen (1895-1931) in Changsha. Twenty of the Twenty-one founding members were students of the First Normal School. As Mao Zedong pointed out in a report on the affairs of the New Citizen Study Society, “Another reason [for launching the Society] was that most of us were Mr Yang Huaizhong’s (namely Yang Changji) students. Being exposed to Mr Yang Huaizhong’s thought and idea, we formed a view of life that emphasizes continual striving and improvement. From this, the New Citizen Study Society was born.”⁶

Mao regarded Yang as the mentor of the New Citizen Study Society, while Yang foresaw that Mao and Cai would play the most decisive role in China’s future social and political development in the future. In a letter to Zhang Shizhao, Yang wrote, “I talk to you in all seriousness that these two are greatest talents in the world and have a great potential. If you talk of saving the nation, you must put these two in the most important position.”⁷ The New Citizen Study Society and Wenhua shushe (Cultural Book Society) established by Mao played vital roles in advocating new ideas and promoting a new culture in Hunan.⁸ In 1919, one third of members of the New Citizen Study Society went to France on the Work-Study programme. Cai Hesen was one of them. In Paris he was exposed to the trend of communist socialism and became a communist. More importantly, he was the key person in the introduction of Communist theory and thought to the young Mao Zedong.⁹

Prior to 1921, when Mao converted to the Marxist communism and Leninist socialism, the predominant influence in the shaping of the thought of the young Mao was Yang Changji's thought. Indeed, it was from Yang that Mao received his only formal philosophical education and his profound interest in philosophical problems,

⁶ Mao Zedong, “Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao” (Report on the Activities of the New Citizen Study Society), *Xinmin xuehui wenxian huibian* [Collections of literature regarding the New Citizen Study Society], Changsha: Hunan renmin, 1979, cited in Wang Xingguo, “Yang Changji de sixiang jiqi dui Xinmin xuehui zhuyao chengyuan de yingxiang” (Yang Changji’s thought and its influence on the core members of the New Citizen Study Society), *Zhongguo zhixue* [Chinese Philosophy], 12 (1984): 341. For English translation see *Mao’s Road to Power*, vol 2, p. 19. Slight modification has been made.

⁷ Zhang Shizhao, “Yang Huaizhong biezhuàn” (A biographical account of Yang Huaizhong), 1963, reprinted in *Wenji*, p. 389.

⁸ The Cultural Book Society was founded in July 1920, formally established on Aug. 2. See Mao’s *Road to Power*, vol. 1, p. 534 n1.

⁹ See the letter exchanged between Mao and Cai, *Mao’s Road to Power*, vol. 2, pp. 5-14.

especially regarding his worldview, the meaning of an individual's existence and the philosophy of life, all took shape during his days at the First Normal School in Changsha. Furthermore, it was during this period that Mao first formulated his views of how to reform society and China. Mao believed that the radical solution for China's problem lay in "changing fundamentally the mentality of the whole country." The starting point was "reform of philosophy and ethics." Mao criticised the "today's reform" for paying attention only on "minor details" and "side issues" while overlooking the matter of the "ultimate great principle." He asserted that "Those who wish to move the world must move the world's hearts and minds, but instead of vainly attempting conspicuous acts, to move people's heart one must have great ultimate principles (*daben dayuan*)." By These great ultimate principles Mao meant the "truth of universe," and like his teacher and all Confucians who believed the moral sense and humanity inherent in everyone, Mao believed, "The peoples who live in the world are each an integral part of the universe, so the universal truth resides in the heart of every man. It may be incomplete, but it always exists in at least some small measure." Therefore, "if we appeal to the hearts of all under heaven on the basis of great ultimate principles, can any of them fail to be moved? And if all the hearts in the realm are moved, is there anything which cannot be achieved? And if the affairs of the realm can be dealt with, how, then can the state fail to be rich, powerful, and happy?"¹⁰ These ideas derived no doubt directly from his teacher Yang Changji.

Tow other prominent facets of Mao's thought which formulated during this period, namely individualism and realism, two principles he committed to, also originated also from his teacher's two great principles of valuing the self and comprehension of the present.¹¹ These ideas were same as his teacher not only in thought but also in discourse.¹² Moreover, under influence of Yang, Mao also formed a strong inclination of idealist outlook with emphasis on willpower. As Mao himself conceded,

¹⁰ Mao Zedong, "A letter to Li Jinxi, on 23 August 1917," *Mao's Road to Power*, pp. 131, 132.

¹¹ Mao Zedong, "Lunlixue yuanli pizhu" (Marginal Notes to: Freidrich Paulsen, *A System of Ethics*), *Mao wengao*, p. 203. For the English translation see Schram ed. *Mao's Road to Power*, (London, 1992) vol. 1, p. 251.

¹² For Yang's reformist thought see chapter 8 and his two principles see chapter 9.

The teacher who made the strongest impression on me was Yang Chang-chi, a returned student from England, with whose life I was later to become intimately related. He taught ethics, he was an idealist and a man of high moral character. He believed in his ethics very strongly and tried to imbue his students with the desire to become just, moral, virtuous men, useful in society. Under his influence I read a book on ethics translated by Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei and was inspired to write an essay which I entitled "The Energy of the Mind." I was then an idealist and my essay was highly praised by Professor Yang Chang-chi, from his idealist viewpoint. He gave me a mark of 100 for it.¹³

It is true that after 1920 Mao abandoned Yang's intellectualistic-educational approach for Marxism and Leninism, but does this mean that there is a complete cut off between Mao's early thought and the thought thereafter?¹⁴

Looking at Mao's thought after 1940s on, it is not difficult to find out that some characteristics of Mao's early thought remained influential throughout his life. Taking the 1942 movement in Yan'an to rectify the trends of thought (*zhengfeng yundong*) as example, it was, though not complete, but to certain degree, based on Mao's notion of "reforming the mind thoroughly" (*chedi gaizao sixiang*). In 1942, this movement was confined within the party, but after 1949, it extended to the national realm, and reached its zenith in Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). All of these demonstrate clearly Mao's profound concern about ideological and intellectual realm and firm belief in the decisive role of mind and thought in governance. If we inquiry further into the ideological motivation of the Great Leap (1958), which was marked by his exaggeration of power of man's subjective initiative and mind, we will find again the idealistic influence in the economic aspect, and the formation of this characteristic of thought can be traced back to his days in Changsha. Another representative example is his well-known undeterminist slogan *ren ding sheng tian* (man can conquer nature) which became guiding principle in Communist China's agricultural policy. A similar example can also be found in Mao's military thought,

¹³ Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China*, London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1968, p. 146.

¹⁴ There were debates about the approaches to China's reform within the New Citizen Study Society. Xiao Zisheng (1894-1976), also known as Xiao Xudong and one of Mao's closest friends, was the representative of those who insisted their teacher's, namely Yang's intellectualistic-educational approach, while Cai Hesen, one of Mao's closest friends as well, who exposed to the Marxist and Leninist theory of class, maintained proletarian dictatorship and a violent political revolution. The split and main arguments can be seen in Mao's letter to Xiao, Cai and other members of the New Citizen Study Society in France of 1 December 1920. There Mao also explicated his stance of support for Cai's argument. See Mao's Road to Power, vol. 2, pp. 5-14.

such as *zhengzhisixiang guashuai* (Political thought takes the commanding role). However, the linkage between Mao's early and later thought remains an understudied subject.

One of the most important aspects of modern Chinese intellectual history is the intellectual metamorphosis from Confucian tradition to modern thought. The responses of those Chinese intellectuals who were rooted in Confucianism to the challenge of new and Western thoughts and values are therefore of the most significance. Yang's thought, as this study shown, constitutes one of the most complex phenomena of this process. The complexity can be seen in the limits of the traditional approach of intellectual history by Western students and scholars who have usually examined Chinese thought in the framework of a conservatism/liberalism/radicalism triad.¹⁵ However, my study shows that Yang cannot be place in any single of these categories, for intellectual radicalism in terms of social criticism, political liberalism and gradualism, co-exist in his thought alongside cultural conservatism. As Schwartz points out that the trouble with using such terms when it comes to both their definition and their operation lies as much in Chinese circumstance as in their origins in studies of modern Western intellectual history. In other words, the original limits and weakness has been unavoidably brought to the study of modern Chinese thought and reflect precisely the complexity of modern Chinese intellectual history.¹⁶

¹⁵ In the confrontation with the Western collision, the various thinking and concerns of Chinese intellectual revolved chiefly round the essential socio-political and cultural problems, such as where did Chinese nation go, the attitude towards the traditional culture, by the same token, how to accept the new ideas and values from the West. According to their basic attitude towards these questions and the way of solution they chosen, these Chinese intellectual have been usually divided into three categories: radicalism, liberalism and conservatism by Western historian. Radicals refer to those who held the revolutionary, in opposite to reformism, violent and extremist approach, such as Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu; liberal refers to a group of Chinese intellectual, such as Hu Shi and Wu Zhihui, and the terms which are often used to describe the third group are "traditionalist", "cultural conservative" to distinguish from conservative in politics, and "conservative nationalist." The Chinese conservatism remains less explored subject. For the modern study of Chinese Conservatism see Mary Clabaugh Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung-Chih restoration, 1862-1874*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957 and Charlotte Furth ed. *The limits of change: essays on conservative alternatives in republican China*, Cambridge Massachusetts & London: Harvard University Press, 1976.

¹⁶ Schwartz, "Note on Conservatism in general and in China in particular," *The Limits of Change: Essays on conservative alternatives in republican China*, (1976), pp. 3-21.

This study has also revealed another fundamental theme of Chinese intellectual history, that is, the fate of Confucianism in modern and contemporary China. Yang's case goes far beyond both Levenson's position of Chinese intellectual dilemma between emotional need for commitment to Chinese tradition and rational choice of new and Western ideas, and the dilemma between tradition and modernity discussed by Allito Guy in his study of Liang Shuming. For Yang such dilemmas simply did not exist. His espousal of humanistic Confucianism presented him with no difficulties when it came to embracing Western liberal ideas and values. Yang's thought and life afford a model example of the vitality of Confucianism.

Appendix:

Yang's writings, correspondence and publications

1891-1902

“Dahuazhai riji (xuanchao) 达化斋日记 (选抄) (Selected diary of *Dahau* studio, 1891-1895), *Yang Changji wenji* 杨昌济文集 [Works of Yang Changji] Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1983, pp. 1-15. (Abbr. *Wenji*)

[This part of diaries is discovered in the book collection of Li Jingxi 黎锦西 (1890-1978), one of Yang's closest friends. Li, a native of Xiangtan, Hunan, was the colleague of Yang at the First Normal School of Changsha prior to his move to Beijing in 1915. During his time in Changsha, Li, as one of founder and manager of *Hongwen shushe* (Hongwen Publishing House), was an activist in publishing and educational enterprise. Yang was the supporter and contributor of journals *Hunan jiaoyu zazhi* [Journal of education Hunan] and *Gongyan* [Public opinion] published by Hongwen she. Quite a few of Yang's writings during the period of 1913-1915 were published by Hongwen she, for instance Yang's *Lunyu leichao* (Classified and annotated *Analects* with new interpretation). In 1952 Li put a note below the title on the copy saying “this was diary of Mr. Yang Huaizhong (Changji). In 1914 when he was teaching in Changsha, the ‘Hongwen she’ asked the secretary to copy them [in hand].” See editorial footnote in *Yang Changji wenji* [Anthology of Yang Changji] (Hunan: 1983), p.1. There is a problem with the accuracy of the date, we find parts of diary of 1895 are same as parts of “diary of 1896” which is reprinted in *Dahua zhai riji* [Diary of Dahua studio] (Changsha) in 1981. In the circumstance of lacking more corroboratory information to judge, for a moment we take “diary of 1896” in *Dahua zhai riji* as the standard, for that is more complete than Li Jinxi's copy.]

“Dahuazhai riji” 达化斋日记 (Diary of *Dahau* studio), (1896, 1899, 1914, 1915, 1919), *Xue Deng* 学灯 (a supplement of *Shishi xinbao* 时事新报) Shanghai, Dec. 1920 - June 1921. This part of diaries is reprinted in *Dahuazhai riji* 达化斋日记 [Diary of *Dahau* studio], Hunan: Renmin chubanshe, 1981.

“Lun Hunan zunzhi sheli shangwujia yi xian zhenxing nonggong zhi xue” 论湖南遵旨设立商务局宜先振兴农工之学 (On how Hunan should take precedence in the promotion of studies of agriculture and industry over the establishment of a Commercial Bureau under the imperial edict), *Xiang Bao* 湘报, No. 153 (1898). Reprinted in *Wenji*, pp. 16-20.

1903

“Dahuazhai riji” 达化斋日记 (Diary of *Dahau* studio), *Youxue yibian* 游学译编 [Study abroad and Translations], (Tokyo) Vol. 8 (May 1903). Reprinted in *Wenji*, pp. 21-28.

[This part of diaries should be written during the period of the Hunan reform movement (1897-8) and 1902 before Yang sailed off to Japan. (Abbr. “Riji” (1903))]

(Anonymous) “Jiaoyu fanlun” 教育泛论 (A general discussion of education), *Youxue yibian* 游学译编 [Study abroad and Translations] (Tokyo), Vol 9 (August 1903):865-870. Reprinted in Zhang Nan & Wang Renzhi ed. *Xinhaigeming qian shinian jian shilun wenxuan* [Selected Essays and Articles on current events published from ten years proceeding the Revolution of 1911], Hong Kong: Sanlian Book Co. 1962, pp. 400-404.

[“Jiaoyu fanlu,” appearing in *Youxue yibian*, issue 9, 1903, is unsigned. In fact all the articles published in *Youxue yibian* were unsigned, including Yang's “Dahuazhai riji” (The Diary of Dahua studio), in the issue 8, 1903. “Dahuazhai riji” is discovered and reprinted by Wang

Xingguo in *Yang Changji wenji* [The anthology of Yang Changji] (1983). However, “Jiaoyu fanlun” is overlooked. It has not appeared in any publication of Yang or regarding Yang so far. When we compare the main points made by Yang and the expression between “Jiaoyu fanlun” and another signed article by him “Gao xuesheng” (An Exhortation to Students), which appeared in *Guomin* [Citizen] 1:1, 1919, no one could refuse to recognise that the authors of two articles are the same. For instance, in “Gao xuesheng” (An exhortation to Students) Yang claimed that “How can scholars establish themselves? One way is to value the self (*guiwo*); the other is to comprehend the present thoroughly (*tongjin*).” (See *Wenji*, p. 364-365.) The points referring to self-reliance and emphasizing the present in “Gao xuesheng” (An exhortation to students) can also be found in “Jiaoyu fanlun” as well where he stated “There are two great notions which people engaged in education must know: one is to value oneself (*guiwo*), the other is to understand the present age thoroughly (*tongjin*).” Further irrefutable proof can be seen in sentences such as “If I survey physical space horizontally, there is not one thing in all the vast landscape I can rely upon except for myself. If I examine time vertically, from the most ancient times until today, there is nothing I can hold onto except for the immediate present.” Exactly the same expression is found in “Jiaoyu fanlun.” Furthermore, in the opening sentences of this article, Yang wrote, “I have said before.” This is indicative that this was not the first time Yang spoke of the ideas of self-reliance and emphasizing the present. These two ideas can also be found in his “Dahuazhai riji” published in 1903, written during the period from Reform movement in Hunan, 1897-98, to the spring of 1903 when he left to study in Japan. (See *Wenji*, p. 24, 26). Therefore, I come to the conclusion that the author of “Jiaoyu fanlun” is Yang Changji. This discovery is of crucial importance for an exploration of the shaping and development of the main strains of Yang’s thought.]

1913

“Ji Yingguo zhi jiaoyu qingxing” 记英国之教育情形 (A Report on British Education), *Hunan jiaoyu zazhi*, 湖南教育杂志 [Journal of Hunan Education], 2.14-15 (31 August 1913). The article appeared also in [*Hangzhou*] *Jiaoyu zhoubao* [杭州] 教育周报 [Hangzhou Educational Weekly], no. 30-33 (30 Jan., 8, 15, 22 February 1914). Reprinted in *Wenji*, pp. 32-42.

“Jiaoyu yu zhengzhi” 教育与政治 (Education and Politics), *Hunan jiaoyu zazhi* 湖南教育杂志, 2.16 (31 October 1913). Reprinted in *Wenji*, pp. 43-46.

“Jiaoyu shang dang zhuyi zhi dian” 教育上应注意之点 (Some points which we should pay attention in the educational realm), *Hunan jiaoyu zazhi* 湖南教育杂志, 2.16 (31 October 1913). Reprinted in *Wenji*, pp. 47-51.

“Yu guiguo huo duiyu jiaoyu zhi ganxiang” 余归国后对于教育之感想 (My opinion on education after returning to China), *Hunan jiaoyu zazhi* 湖南教育杂志 [Hunan Journal of Education], 2.17 (30 November 1913) 3.3,4 (31 March and 30 April 1914). Reprinted in *Wenji*, pp. 52-66.

1914

“Lunyu leichao” 论语类钞 (A classified and annotated *Analects*), Hongwen Tushushe, Changsha, summer of 1914. Reprinted in *Wenji* (1983), pp. 67-99.

Jiaoyuxue jiangyi 教育学讲义 (Manuscript of Lecture in Education), (mimeograph) 1914, n. p. It is published in *Wenji*, pp. 100-197.

“Quanxue pian” 劝学篇 (An exhortation to Study) in *Gong Yan* 公言 [Public Opinion], Changsha, Vol. 1:1, October 1914. Reprinted in *Wenji* (1983), pp. 198-204.

- “Dahuazhai riji” (bubai) 达化斋日记 (补白) (Dairy of Dahua Studio) (filler), *Gong Yan* 公言 [Public Opinion], Changsha, Vol. 1:1, October 1914.
- “Yu gailiang shehui zhi yijian” 余改良社会之意见 (My suggestions of the reform of social customs), *Gong Yan* 公言 [Public Opinion], Changsha, Vol. 1:2, November 1914. Reprinted in *Wenji* (1983), pp. 205-210.
- “Daohai lieshi Yang jun Shouren shilüe” 蹈海烈士杨君守仁事略 (A brief biography of martyr Yang Shouren), *Jiayin zazhi* 甲寅杂志 [The Tiger], Vol. 1:4, Nov. 10, 1914. Reprinted in *Wenji* (1983), pp. 29-31.
- 1915**
- “Dahuazhai riji” (bubai) 达化斋日记 (补白) (Dairy of Dahua Studio) (filler), *Gong Yan* 公言 [Public Opinion], Changsha, Vol. 1:3, 20 January 1915.
- CZY Sheng (Yang Changji), “Zongjiao Lun” 宗教论 (On Religion), *Jiayin zazhi* 甲寅杂志 [The Tiger], Vol. 1.6 (June 10, 1915):1-7
- , “Gailiang jiazu zhidu zhaji” 改良家族制度札记 (Reading notes on reform of the clan and family system), *Jiayin zazhi* 甲寅杂志 [The Tiger], Vol. 1.6 (June 10, 1915):1-10
- , “Guo zhi dayou” 国之大忧 (The big sorrow of our country), *Jiayin zazhi* 甲寅杂志 [The Tiger], Vol. 1.8 (August 10 1915).
- 1916**
- “Gezhong lunlizhuyi zhi shulüe ji gaiping” 各种伦理主义之述略及概评 (A critical account of Western ethical theories), in *Eastern Miscellany*, 东方杂志 13.2,3,4 (1916). Reprinted in *Wenji* (1983), pp. 247-273.
[It was later published as one volume of series of *Dongfang wenku* 东方文库 (Eastern Library) under the new title of *Xiyang Lunli zhuyi shuping* 西洋伦理主义述评 [An exposition and critique of Western ethical theories] by Commercial Press in 1923.]
- “Zhexue shang gezhong lilun zhi lüeshu” 哲学上各种理论之略述 (An exposition of significant ideas of Western Philosophy). The article was first published in *Min Sheng* 民声 [People's voice] (Changsha), vol. 1, no. 1,2,3, in 1916. After Yang's death, Li Shicen (1892-1934) republished it in *Min Duo* 民铎 (People's Bell) (Shanghai), 2.2,3,4,5 (1921, Posthumous). It is reprinted in *Wenji*, pp. 274-343.
- “Zhisheng pian” 治生篇 (On the principle of production of wealth), in *Xin qingnian* 新青年 [New Youth], 2.4 (December 1916):353-360; 2.5 (January 1917):451-458. Reprinted in *Wenji* (1983), pp. 229-246.
[According to his diary, Yang wrote the draft of this article in the late spring of 1915, see his *Riji*, entry of 17 April 1915, p. 174.]
- 1917**
- “Zhi jiaoyu zongzhang Fan Yuanlian shu” 致教育总长范源瀛书 (A letter to Fan Yuanlian, Minister of Education), *Wenji*, pp. 344-245.
- “Lun Hunan chuangshe shengli daxue zhi biyao” 论湖南创设省立大学之必要 (On the pressing need of creation of a provincial university in Hunan), *Wenji*, pp. 346-355.

[This is a proposal written for submitting to Hunan government around the turn of 1918. Yang Kaizhi 杨开智 (1898-?), the son of Yang Changji, presented the manuscript of the proposal to the Culture and History Archive, Hunan Provincial People's Committee in September 1956. The editor has made an important correction in the date. According to Yang Changji's son Yang Kaizhi's note, the proposal was written in 1916 when the Hunan Higher Normal School was closed. The editor points out that the Hunan Higher Normal School was ended in 1917. Furthermore, according the note in the section 5 given by Yang Changji himself, sections from 1 to 5 should be written in 1917, and the final four sections in 1918 as supplement.]

1918

Yang Changji (trans.), "Jiehun lun" 结婚论 (On marriage) (A translation from Westernmarck), *Xin qingnian* 新青年 [New Youth], 5.3 (1918): 215-231.

---- (trans), *Xiyang lunlixue shi* 西洋伦理学史 [A history of Western ethics] Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshu, vol 1, Nov. 1918 and vol 2 1919.

[It is a translation of Yoshida Seichi's (1872-1945) lectures of history of Western ethics. Yoshida Seichi was professor in ethics at the High Normal School in Tokyo where Yang studied during the period from 1904-09. This translation was reprinted in September 1920, the year when Yang passed away with Hu Shi's "Preface."]

1919

"Gao xuesheng" 告学生 (To Students), *Guomin zazhi* 国民杂志 [The Citizen] (Beijing) 1.1 (10 January 1919). Reprinted in *Wenji*, pp. 363-367.

"Xiyang lunlixue shi zhi zhailu" 西洋伦理学史之摘录 (Extracts from my translations of *A history of Western ethics*), *Minduo* 民铎 [People's Bell] (Shanghai), 6 (1919). Reprinted in *Wenji*, pp. 356-362.

Yang Changji (Trans.), *Lunlixue zhi genben wenti* 伦理学之根本问题 [Die ethischen Grundfragen] by Theodor Lipps Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshu, 1919.

1923 and afterwords

Xiyang Lunli zhuyi shuping 西洋伦理主义述评 [An exposition and critique of Western ethical theories], Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1923. Series: *Dongfang wenku* 东方文库 (Eastern Library).

[This is a book-form of "Gezhong lunli zhuyi zhi shulue ji gaiping" 各种伦理主义之述略及概评 [A brief account on various theories of Western ethics with commentaries] was first published in *Eastern Miscellany*, 东方杂志 13.2,3,4 (1916).]

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[This manuscript is survived in the Institute of Modern History, Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing]

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